AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE OF A VIABLE PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTIC

by

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Current pentecostal scholarship is attempting to articulate pentecostal theological distinctives. For hermeneutics, this involves both a descriptive and a prescriptive approach to the use of the Bible.

The *descriptive* approach appraises the historical roots of pentecostalism, which include the Wesleyan / Holiness movement, the radical Reformation, Tertullian and Montanism, and earliest charismatic communities. These understood Christian Scripture as guidelines to a Way of behaviour and testimony, rather than a source-book of doctrine. This 'alternative history' experienced the Enlightenment on a different level to protestantism and fundamentalism. Many of the concerns of historical church theology and hermeneutics during the last centuries are thus not always shared by pentecostals. The choice is: articulate a distinctive pentecostal hermeneutic, or 'borrow' from non-pentecostal theology.

The *prescriptive* approach first investigates some of the latter options: some identify closely with conservative evangelical hermeneutics. Others prefer the political hermeneutic of the socio-political contextual theologies. The burgeoning Faith Movement has influenced many pentecostals. Some pentecostal scholars show interest in 'post-modern' literary theory.

A viable pentecostal hermeneutic might be *prescribed* as follows: It respects the demands of scientific method, not ignoring the concerns of contemporary hermeneutical philosophy and literary theory. It highlights specifically pentecostal concerns: the teleology of any encounter with the text; historical continuity with the early church groups; implementation, demonstration and realisation of the literal intent of the text; the role of biblical narrative in defining experience of God; and the authority granted ongoing revelation via the charismata

in the light of the canon.

Application of a pentecostal hermeneutic would emphasise an holistic understanding of Scripture, the crucial role of the charismatic community, awareness of issues in the ongoing hermeneutical debate, and the need for the interpreter's personal ongoing charismatic experience. In a distinctively pentecostal exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 prophecy is discussed as normal liturgical activity, as a confrontation of outsiders and unbelievers, in terms of its regulation, and in the light of spiritual discernment.

Key terms:

Pentecostalism; hermeneutics; literary theory; Wesleyanism; Anabaptism; Tertullian; early church; positivism and history; charismatic community; ongoing revelation; 1 Corinthians 14; prophecy

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FOREWORD

This study is the third major research project which I have undertaken.

The *first* was a thesis for the D.Th degree at Unisa, in Systematic Theology (1989). It entailed a pentecostal critique of Jürgen Moltmann's political theology. This was the result of my concern at the forceful insistence on 'socio-political relevance' encountered in the study material offered in virtually every section of theology during my years of study for a Bachelor of Divinity degree at UNISA. Not only was I concerned by the limited ideological approach to such 'relevance', but I had experienced the pastoral difficulties and confusion implicit in pastorate to black and white in erstwhile Rhodesia during the bush war (1973-1980). During this period I personally witnessed the results of the hostility of the 'freedom fighters' to pentecostal and evangelical Christians, and knew that many found material support and willing apologetes at Christian mission stations, and from churchmen. My aim was to become more theologically sophisticated in my understanding of the traditional pentecostal and free church position of apolitical detachment from political power struggles. In conversation with Moltmann's major tenets I attempted to formulate a model for a pentecostal approach to socio-political issues (Clark 1989:197-231). Some of the conclusions I presented as a paper titled 'Pentecostals and politics' at the 1988 Annual Conference of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Lexington KY. On the basis of this research I became involved in the debates within my own denomination concerning the future of a racially unified church in the new South Africa, at both theological and administrative levels. These debates continue until the present.

During the course of this research I discovered that strong support for the radical apolitical stance came from the New Testament interpretation of scholars such as Martin Hengel and Ethelbert Stauffer. Their view of the Jesus of the gospels allowed little room for the image of the 'revolutionary Christ' encountered in the works of many of the systematic theologians.

The *second* major research project which I undertook not only underlined this consideration, but also led me to conclude that the findings of Biblical (i e Old and New Testament) scholarship appeared more relevant to the pentecostal movement and its formulation of doctrine

than did those of post-Enlightenment dogmatics. This project was a publication prepared for the Institute for Theological Research at UNISA in 1987, published in 1989 as *What is distinctive about pentecostal theology?* (Clark & Lederle et al 1989), and reviewed by Peter Hocken in *Pneuma* 12 (1990), 63-65. This work was a review of and contribution to the discussion on pentecostal distinctives, and surveyed the notions of pentecostal experience, commitment and theology in various contexts: pentecostal hermeneutics, the tension between doctrine and experience, liturgy, preaching and missions, and socio-political con- ns. During the course of its preparation I discovered that a pentecostal as well-known as Walter Hollenweger shared my conviction with regard to the importance of biblical theology for pentecostals, at least as far as pentecostal ecclesiology was concerned (Hollenweger 1977:429). It seemed that for me it would be meaningful to pursue my own interests in pentecostal theological research within the field of the biblical sciences, and New Testament in particular.

Since 1984 I have been a lecturer at the Apostolic Faith Mission Theological College in Johannesburg, South Africa, and since late 1987 I have specialised in New Testament. This position has included the study of biblical hermeneutics. I have long been aware that the pentecostal movement has never formally spelled out its approach to the Scriptures, and that pentecostal hermeneutics has become a 'burning issue' during the last decade and a half of pentecostal studies. I have also been puzzled by the ambivalent attitude to the pentecostal movement held by some of its critics: that we *love* the Bible, but don't always seem to *understand* it correctly; that we are a warm, dynamic, positive movement, but (sadly) are guilty of poor exegesis. I am convinced that the resolution lies in the fact that, while we perhaps do not use the Bible in the same way as our critics (nor in the way some of our non-pentecostal teachers would have liked us to), there *is* a consistent and viable hermeneutic underlying the pentecostal movement.

Since 1989 I have served on the Committee for Doctrine, Ethics and Liturgy of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, as well as the Curatorium of that denomination. I have been involved in the discussion around the theological aspects of the question of racial unity within the AFM, as well as the attempts to resolve the tensions between the adherents of the more political theologies and other members of the church who are more consciously apolitical,

submitting numerous papers on these issues to various bodies in the church. During the course of this process I have been increasingly impressed by the need for pentecostals to achieve some sort of consensus on how they understand and use their theological resources, such as the Bible, charismatic experience and ongoing revelation.

To attempt to outline a pentecostal hermeneutic is thus the specific field of this my *third* research project. I hope to bring to it the insights gained during the completion of the other two projects. This would include any philosophical sophistication gained from my previous doctorate in Systematic Theology, as well insights into the antecedents and ethos of the pentecostal movement developed during the preparation of the publication on distinctives. I have conducted this research *as* a third major project, not attempting to recapitulate the process by which I reached the conclusions presented in the previous works, except where these have direct bearing on the subject of a pentecostal hermeneutic. Those findings therefore serve as presuppositions and a point of departure for this study. I also bring to it my experience as a pentecostal pastor (most of it in a war situation), 14 years of lecturing in a theological seminary, a fascination with 'alternative' church history, and a love for the Bible, which book I do not consider it outrageously fundamentalistic to term 'The Word of God'.

Perhaps an editing note should be made here. I have opted consistently for the use of 'pentecostal' (and its derivatives) in this work, as opposed to 'Pentecostal' etc. Many dictionaries now report the term as a proper noun (as Anglican, Methodist, etc): however, I am not sure that pentecostal scholarship should uncritically follow that road. The pentecostal movement remains precisely that - a movement - and 'pentecostal' is thus a descriptor (adjectival, even when used substantively) of a large, diverse grouping with a common kernel in its ethos. 'Pentecostal', to this scholar, appears to be too precise an indicator for such a phenomenon. Perhaps this is something pentecostals need to debate among themselves.

Dedicated to my loving and forbearing wife, Val.

Roodepoort, South Africa

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The theme of this work is centred in New Testament science, and thus attempts to make use primarily of the categories and methods of that science. However, it is necessary first to take note of the ongoing attempts at self-understanding and explication among pentecostal theologians and churches[1]. It is not a simple matter to objectively establish how influential theologians with formal qualifications are among the pentecostal grass-roots, and in a movement in which the grass-roots member is still intensively involved and influential, it is prudent for the theologian who wishes to be relevant to say *why* they are attempting some specific area of research. This concern is reinforced by the previous research I have conducted within systematic theological science.

1.1 The challenge of a pentecostal theological approach to the Scriptures

The pursuit of a formal, academic theology within the ranks of the classical pentecostal movement is a challenging enterprise, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, classical pentecostalism is by no means doctrinally nor structurally homogenous. The strongest unifying factor is *common experience and history* rather than common confession. There is also no single recognised founding figure to whom the movement as a whole looks back, although many of the early pioneers are revered for the part they played in the establishment and spread of the movement. There is thus no pentecostal *tradition* of theology, although it could be argued that a clear pentecostal *ethos* can be distinguished in practice and values. For this reason it is possible to find within pentecostal scholarship support for, and opposition to, virtually any claim or assertion made concerning the nature of pentecostal theology. There is also not a large base of pentecostal scholarly writings which is accepted as authoritative by and representative of the majority of pentecostal scholars or groups. Since most pentecostal scholars understand this to be the case, much of pentecostal scholarship

consists of suggestions and tentative proposals toward description and self-understanding.

Secondly, the role of such a theology within the movement itself is not readily definable. The early growth of the movement was populist in nature, and even today it is publicly recognised (in the West) mainly in the ministry of media personalities and evangelists. Certainly the movement has never been officially 'directed' by formal academic theological articulation, and academic theologians within the movement often feel their position to be ambivalent (articulated by eg. Kydd 1988:120,127). This is not of course unique to pentecostalism, particularly in the increasingly secularised West. However, there is a strong ground-swell of anti-intellectualism in pentecostal circles which limits the impact of reasoned academic debate upon the movement.[2]

Thirdly, the movement has been taken seriously in recent decades primarily because of its impressive growth. Although this growth appears to have declined in the so-called First World, it has increased dramatically in many Third World countries, notably sub-Saharan Africa. The lateral spread of the movement into the historical churches via the neo-pentecostal and charismatic 'renewals' has also elicited response from many non-pentecostal scholars. Indeed, a large proportion of theologising concerning pentecostalism has originated from those circles. Interest has, however, often been in the movement as a *phenomenon* rather than as a new theological departure. Hollenweger maintains this explicitly:

> The theological insights of the pentecostal movement are neither new nor valuable..... the questions posed for the traditional churches by the spread of the pentecostal movement are more important than the answers given by pentecostalism.
>
> (Hollenweger 1977:506-507).[3]

In view of these reasons, there is some debate among pentecostal theologians themselves, as well as among interested observers, concerning the nature and role of a specifically pentecostal theology. Some emphasise the *distinctiveness* of pentecostalism, and urge the development of a distinctive pentecostal approach to and method of doing theology. Others would prefer that the elements peculiar to pentecostalism not be emphasised too emphatically, and that the movement's *continuity* with the broader church and protestant theologies be emphasised.

I have outlined elsewhere my own position (which is qualified support for the former option) in this debate. (I have also dealt in the same work with the inherently different approaches and interests of, on the one hand, non-pentecostals who attempt to integrate their experience of the charismata into their theological traditions; and on the other, pentecostals who are approaching the theological task from a new and non-traditional perspective - Clark & Lederle et al 1989:19-21). However, whatever position is taken, both camps need to provide elucidation of their respective positions. The question today is: *How* distinctive is the pentecostal way of doing theology?[4] This work aims at addressing the question from the broad perspective of hermeneutics in general, and with particular reference to the pentecostal approach to and use of the New Testament Scriptures.

1.2 The question of method

The growth of the pentecostal movement preceded its own attempts at formulation of its theological distinctives. For this reason any attempt to state pentecostal beliefs and practices must initially be *descriptive*. Such an approach attempts to identify pentecostal *propria* from a study of the movement as phenomenon. The historical roots and development of the movement, its relationship to and dependence upon other theological streams, its social dynamics: these are source material during this part of the research. According to du Plessis this was true of Christian theology in its primitive origins (1977:184), and it is true that it is not a factor unique to pentecostalism today. However, it is *particularly relevant* to any attempt to understand the pentecostal movement.

Today the movement is largely recognised as being part of the 'mainline' church movement, as distinct from the cults and sects which have arisen around certain personalities and 'revelations' in the last century and a half. This acceptance is often reluctant and highly qualified, as Ward cautions fellow pentecostals (1975:119-120), sometimes at that time still forcefully denied (Gardiner 1974; Spence 1978). In South Africa, many libraries which use the Dewey classification system still file pentecostal works among the 'cults and -isms' at worst, and under 'pneumatology' at best. However, it can be argued that it has developed its

ethos largely outside of the church history of the major protestant, and even evangelical churches. This was not always understood by early pentecostal leaders and teachers, with the result that many regional pentecostal groups absorbed, or reacted against, the teachings and practices of the major historical churches in their environment.[5] For example, North American pentecostals have often sought to define themselves in relationship to (and by the theological methods of) the large conservative evangelical churches; Scandinavians in terms of the Lutheran influence; Afrikaans South Africans in terms of the Dutch Reformed churches.

A descriptive approach takes note of such interactions, and by seeing past them attempts to determine what, if anything, is specifically pentecostal about the beliefs and practices under scrutiny. In terms of hermeneutics and biblical theology this would involve identifying consistency between pentecostal practice and the pentecostal understanding and use of the Bible. This question of the understanding of the Biblical texts cannot be divorced from the general concepts of *knowledge and understanding* in pentecostalism. Menzies points out that the hermeneutical question is the most basic question to be settled before theological self-understanding or interaction can be attempted:

> However, the heart of the theological battle today lies below the level of specific theological issues, as such. It is the bedrock issue of hermeneutics itself. Inevitably, the real crux is that of *methodology*. The presuppositions that govern the theological task will in large measure determine the kind of product which emerges. Although identifying a useful pentecostal hermeneutic will not in itself ensure a solution to all theological problems, it may serve as a helpful guide through which to sift the Biblical data.
>
> (Menzies 1985:5)

Ervin has shown that pentecostal theology also needs to define a peculiar epistemology that makes sense of the charismatic phenomena which are part of normal pentecostal experience. After the essential first steps of applying linguistic, literary and historical analysis to the text to be interpreted, he argues that the exegetical process would proceed further as follows, in the light of a pneumatic epistemology:

> A pneumatic epistemology posits an awareness that the Scriptures are the product of an

> experience with the Holy Spirit which the Biblical writers describe in phenomenological language. From the standpoint of a pneumatic epistemology, the interpretation of this phenomenological language is much more than an exercise in semantics or descriptive linguistics.
>
> (Ervin 1985:33)

The attempt to describe how pentecostals have used and understood the Scriptures is only the initial task in attempting to define a pentecostal hermeneutic. Pentecostal theologians are still primarily concerned with the notion of pentecostal *self-understanding*, both personally and in terms of the movement itself. This concern will express itself in an attempt to prescribe (to a certain extent)[6] what a consistent pentecostal hermeneutic should look like. The Western approach to philosophy and theology is usually centred on the attempt to establish a logically consistent system of understanding and application. This concern would be expressed in the pentecostal movement by an attempt to identify inconsistencies and liabilities, to establish what is desirably consistent with the ethos and *propria* of the movement, and to point toward improvements which could enhance the ministry and self-understanding of pentecostal believers. The historical antecedents of the movement may not be arbitrarily binding upon such an attempt, but should assist in establishing what distinctive understanding of reality and history has made pentecostalism a coherent movement.

1.3 Considerations and limitations

This study will take cognisance of the following considerations:

1. Pentecostals have tended to use the Bible to propagate a certain spiritual *experience* and *practice*, rather than to propound certain *beliefs*.[7] The movement has found its dynamic not as much in a peculiar doctrine as in peculiar practice. The emphasis upon the baptism and power of the Holy Spirit as revealed in contemporary experience of the charismata is not seen as a doctrinal contribution to Christian theology as much as a rediscovery of a *dynamic* which is experienced rather than merely believed or confessed. In practical terms this means that pentecostal distinctives tend to be rooted in scriptural *narrative* rather than in the more didactic

portions of Scripture. However, it should be emphasised that a too rigid distinction between the use of the two should not be forced to the extent that an option *has* to be made for the one as opposed to the other as a basis for pentecostal belief and practice. They are not mutually exclusive. This notion will be discussed in detail later.

2. Emphasis upon experience and practice would seem to argue for a strong link between *pentecostalism and Pietism*, in terms of real concerns and values. While pentecostal theology is not without appreciation of the contribution to its own cause and origins of Pietist theology and hermeneutics, the historical antecedents of pentecostalism and Pietism differ significantly at crucial points, as shown below. It may also be argued that the pentecostal emphasis upon (among other things) the charismata, and the gift of healing in particular, reveals as great a concern for physical reality and *soteria* as for the spiritual. This study should not thus be seen as just one more exercise in Pietist theologising[8].

3. *The growth in numbers* and influence of the pentecostal movement is a spur toward the type of research undertaken in this study. While the movement must be taken seriously in terms of what is happening on the ground, it is significant that a work as comprehensive and recent as Thiselton's (1992) should take no cognisance at all of pentecostal-charismatic scholarship and concerns.[9] This area of research is critical for pentecostals who wish the movement to retain those elements of its dynamic that are based upon its distinctives. It is as important for the wider church which, in its theology, is realising anew how crucial the hermeneutical questions are. Pentecostal world-view and spirituality can provide a unique perspective and contribution to current debates.

4. This study will make use of as many relevant sources as possible. However, it must be realised that the pentecostal movement has been *more visible* in North America and the Third World than in Western Europe. This is true despite the existence of significant pentecostal groups within the United Kingdom and some of its Anglo-saxon ex-colonies, and also in

Scandinavia and Switzerland. For this reason European scholarship has not always taken cognisance of the contributions of pentecostals. The interest in the radical Reformation of a respected figure such as Jürgen Moltmann, as well as his interest in free-church structures and 'charismatic' ministry, is a welcome, although so-far rather isolated corrective to this situation.[10] However, most serious and influential pentecostal-charismatic research has taken place outside of Europe, with the possible exception of the Catholic-pentecostal dialogue of recent years. On the other hand, European scholarship has usually been in the lead in discussion of hermeneutical philosophy. This study will necessarily take both these realities into consideration.

As a South African contribution, this work will also attempt to make known current South African contributions to pentecostal research. Most formally-trained pentecostal theologians in South Africa are Afrikaans-speakers, and their works are normally published in Afrikaans. This means that their point of view is seldom heard outside of their own narrow national confines.[11] It also makes the South African voice weaker in overseas participation in pentecostal debate, since the handful of English pentecostal publications that originate here give the impression, by their sheer paucity, of an insignificant pentecostal presence in the country. This is far from the true state of affairs. I will also attempt, particularly in end-notes, to include information concerning the pentecostal movement in Southern Africa which may be illustrative of some of the points I wish to make regarding hermeneutics, or merely contributory to conveying some of the atmosphere of pentecostalism in Africa to non-African residents who might consult this work. Some of this material will be unavoidably autobiographical, stemming as it does from my own ministry and leadership experiences in a multicultural South African pentecostal church. The intention of such autobiographical content is not to *substantiate* conclusions I have reached from scholarly research, but primarily to *illustrate*. Nor is it offered as *testimony* (as Moore 1995 and McQueen 1995 intend such material to be in their own works); it is offered as additional information, and therefore probably exhibits all the pitfalls of subjectivity that can be expected in such offerings. Where other peculiarly South African information *can* be substantiated by scholarly contributions this is clearly indicated in the text or end-notes.

In summary, this research will:

i) Attempt to describe the historical roots of the pentecostal movement, and its ethos, in terms of their implications for our topic;

ii) Give an overview of some of the approaches to Scripture evidenced in the movement to date;

iii) Outline, in conversation with current pentecostal research in this area, those elements which would appear crucial to a distinctively pentecostal hermeneutic;

iv) Propose a model for pentecostal use of the New Testament which will be tested in an exegesis of a portion of the New Testament.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 1

1. The topic 'hermeneutics' is basic to all areas of theological research, and can therefore be adequately subsumed within all of the six major Christian theological sub-divisions. In the current atmosphere at the University of South Africa, where the Faculty of Theology is no longer considered to be exclusively Christian (there are adherents of other religions employed as academic staff within the faculty), the traditional demarcations become even more blurred. What, for instance, does one make of a non-Christian approach to the biblical sciences? However, in terms of the pentecostal movement, most discussion concerning biblical hermeneutics has taken place within and by scholars of the biblical sciences (a less than exhaustive selection of pentecostal/charismatic contributions used in this research includes Arrington 1988; Autry 1993; Baker 1995; Byrd 1993; Cargal 1993; Ellington 1996; Ervin 1985; Fee 1976, 1983, 1987 & 1994; Gräbe 1993; Hanson 1995; Harrington & Patten 1994; Israel & McNally 1993; McKay 1994; Mclean 1984; McQueen 1995; Menzies 1985; Menzies 1994; Penney 1997; Sheppard 1984 & 1994; Spittler 1985; Stronstad 1993; Thomas 1994). The field has thus been dominated by the interests and contributions of Old and New Testament research rather than of systematic theological. However, more recent developments in which pentecostals appeal to post-modern literary theorists have led the debate into areas of philosophical discussion which are perhaps more traditionally associated with systematic theology than with the biblical sciences. This does not preclude it from being addressed from this perspective by the biblical sciences - Vorster noted that this was the direction in which hermeneutics in the biblical sciences could be expected to develop (Vorster 1980:87). Since in the course of its history most pentecostal use of the Bible has been associated with preaching and teaching rather than with academic research, scholarly discussion of the pentecostal hermeneutical approach also cannot avoid those interests which are more traditionally associated with practical theology.

2. Spittler (1985:56-58) discusses the role of theology as a systematic pursuit within the pentecostal movement at some length, as I have done elsewhere (Clark & Lederle 1989:35-42). It would seem that academic theological endeavour is evaluated in the AFM of SA in cycles: in the late 1960's the AFM Theological College was founded, and became popular in the church. During the early 1980's the early influence of the Faith Movement in SA led to a fall in student intake, followed by a massive surge in the early 1990's (over 4 times the 1980's average). The last few years have seen a decrease, perhaps because of the influence of the short-lived 'Toronto' episode in the church, perhaps because of uncertainty about standards of training created by the unity process in the church, perhaps because of the general resurgence

of an anti-intellectual climate in the AFM.

3. Hocken (1997) affirms this evaluation, although his original scepticism concerning the value of pentecostal explanations of phenomena noted among them (:99) does appear to be modified in his conclusion (:106) that pentecostals are affirming a need, and charting the beginnings, of a distinctive theology. However, he maintains that it must be done in the context of and with the aid of the wider Christian community. In this he echoes König 1991:19ff.

4. As recently as the first two issues of the *Journal for Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series*, the authors refer in their preface to the inferiority complex among pentecostals and pentecostal scholars with regard to the theological enterprise (Land 1993:8 and Johns 1993:7). Both have shown in their works a strong resistance to the negative effects of such a complex. (Moore 1995:11-22 also spells out his own theological odyssey in great detail in this respect). This is indicative of a new sense of self-worth among pentecostals in general and many pentecostal theologians in particular (as per my own comments in Clark & Lederle 1989:4,12,14). This adds the welcome dimension to pentecostal theologising, that every assertion and observation need not be referred to some competent non-pentecostal theologian (usually a 'name' such as Barth or Moltmann) for the necessary corroboration. The danger is that pentecostal theologians might develop such a sense of arrogance and separatism that their works can no longer be used comparatively with the wider church of Jesus Christ. This is König's (1991:19) expressed fear. However, although the *corpus* of pentecostal theological works is growing rapidly, it has not yet reached the stage where such exclusivism could be viable.

5. Writing in the context of the North Atlantic world, Hocken (1997:101) describes the stages through which he has seen the pentecostal movement developing: a wild-fire phase, an organizational phase, and the third phase in which the full ethos of denominationalisation is realised, particularly formalisation of doctrine. He maintains that in this third phase the differences between pentecostalism and evangelicalism becomes least marked. He argues that this rapprochement did not do justice to the foundational distinctives of pentecostalism, and that the debate about and with evangelicalism has highlighted pentecostals distinctives from a perspective that has not always focused on the essence of those distinctives.

6. The term *prescribe* has a rather authoritarian tone, but there seems to be no suitable alternative in terms of the intention of this study. Neither *demarcate* nor *define* nor *determine* adequately state was is being attempted. The process of this study aims at achieving an understanding of the nature and ethos of the pentecostal movement (a descriptive aspect), and in the light of that ethos outlining a hermeneutic which is consistent with such an ethos. The demand of consistency and coherency with what pentecostals understand themselves to be is thus the subject of *prescription*. If this is understood, then the terms *describe* and *prescribe* are the most descriptive of the method utilised here. It must also be understood that the prescription is just one pentecostal attempt and suggestion as to what is entailed in such consistency, and does not imply that this study arbitrarily prescribes a hermeneutic for the entire pentecostal movement. Land (1994:15), in response to Cox's (1994:5) query as to whether Land is describing pentecostals as he sees them, or as he would want them to be, replies '... I am (and Cox puzzles over this) both describing and prescribing. This is because the deep elements of Pentecostal spirituality are both expressive of and judgements upon particular elements of that spirituality as it is practised today.'

7. The tension between experience and doctrine I have discussed in detail in Clark & Lederle 1989:35-42, with numerous references to the discussion among scholars as it stood at that time. Ellington (1996:20), introducing a discussion on pentecostalism and the authority of Scripture, provides four reasons why pentecostals should distinctively formulate their position of doctrine, experience and Scripture: that modernism does not provide adequate categories for speech about God; that pentecostals have failed similarly because they have been wedded to incompatible theological models such as evangelicalism; that pentecostal distinctiveness demands a distinctive pentecostal theology; and that the oral form of local church theology demands that cognisance be taken in theology of the category 'testimony'.

8. This reductionism appears implicit in Du Plessis's (1989:146-147) comment: 'It might be desirable to consider the orthodox churches and the Spirit churches to be components of the same body.... The orthodox churches, with their intellectual and formal approach, might be deemed the brain; Pentecostalism, with its life of feeling, the heart. A body without either organ could not survive.' (By 'orthodox', Du Plessis means the major protestant denominations.)

9. Autry (1993:50) notes the omission of the concept and implications of transcendence in both Gadamer and Thiselton.

10. Moltmann has received increasing attention in pentecostal academic circles. He was the keynote speaker at the Theological Stream of Brighton '91 (Moltmann 1993), had numerous pentecostal responses to one of his books (Moltmann 1991) published in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4 (1994), and contributed an article in the JPT 9 (Moltmann 1996). In 1983 he admitted to Miroslav Volf that his experience of pentecostalism (and therefore of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as pentecostals practice them) had been limited until then to a single occasion in Sweden (Volf 1983).

11. Examples of significant works limited in circulation by their original language are: Bezuidenhout 1980 (a exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 12-14); Burger 1990 (a church history of Southern Africa's largest pentecostal denomination); Hattingh 1984 (a contribution to pastoral theology, liturgy and homiletics); Möller 1975 (on the charismata, with an evaluation of psychological and linguistic evaluations of *glossolalia* which is particularly insightful since the author also has a PhD in psychology); Möller 1994 (a systematic theology, currently being translated into English); and Cronjè 1981 (a discussion of pentecostal distinctives). A number of Afrikaners have recently published in English, eg. Horn 1989, Fourie 1990, and numerous contributions to Gräbe & Hattingh 1997. De Wet (1989) produced an unpublished thesis on the growth of the Black section of the AFM of SA. The South African voice is rather thin since most contributions are also published locally, even though in English. Clark & Lederle (1989) expressed in South Africa many of the sentiments of Land (1993), and Herholdt (1990) dealt with a similar theme to Dayton (1987), yet neither has received the attention granted those internationally published contributions. English-speaking South African pentecostals who have published academic works locally, apart from myself, include Anderson's (1991, 1992 & 1993) contribution to the understanding of Black pentecostalism in South Africa, and Frank Chikane. Chikane and David du Plessis are probably internationally the best-known South African pentecostal figures. Yet the impact of and theological depth of South African pentecostalism exceeds the admittedly noteworthy contributions of an opponent of racial discrimination and a facilitator of pentecostal experience among the historical churches. The limitations of language have affected not only South African pentecostal publications, but also those produced in Latin America and Korea, both areas where there is major pentecostal growth.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PENTECOSTALISM'S ANTECEDENTS FOR PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTICS

While there are those who minimise the differences between pentecostalism and its Christian contemporaries, there is widespread awareness that pentecostals cannot easily be classified as merely 'Reformed/Catholic/Lutheran etc + speaking in tongues.'[1] This *distinctiveness* of the pentecostal movement is not divorced from its origins, its historical antecedents. This is also true of the way the Bible has been viewed and used in pentecostal circles.

2.1 Historical roots of the pentecostal movement

F D Bruner provides probably the most comprehensive list of pentecostal antecedents:

> The ancestral line of the pentecostal movement could appear to stretch from the enthusiastic Corinthians (I Cor 12-14) or even the Old Testament anointed and ecstatic (e.g, Num 11; 1 Sam 10), through the gnostics of all varieties, the Montanists, the medieval and the pre-Reformation spiritualists, the so-called radical, left-wing or Anabaptist movements, the *Schwärmer* of the Reformation period, the post-Reformation Quakers and, when given fresh new parentage through the Pietist, Wesleyan, and revivalist movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Germany, England, and the United States, continuing in the first half of the nineteenth century briefly but very interestingly through Edward Irving in England, and lengthily and very influentially through Charles Finney in America, issuing in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the higher-life and holiness movements which gave birth to their twentieth century child, the pentecostal movement.
>
> (Bruner 1970:35)

Modern pentecostals would largely be satisfied with such a list, although the inclusion of the gnostics is open to debate[2], and the special mention given to the Corinthians obscures the fact that pentecostal phenomena were common in all the first century churches (Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, and Ephesus all being referred to in this regard in Luke's account).[3]

Many scholars have agreed with Bruner's compilation of antecedents (e g Nicol 1966:19; Hart 1978:12-13; McNamee 1974).[4] This consensus propounds an awareness that pentecostalism is not a product of the of the 'official' Reformation, and is not merely another arm of confessional or magisterial protestantism. In terms of the use of Scripture in the movement it is crucial to note this alternative status. It might imply that much of the hermeneutical discussion of the last two centuries may not have been of particular relevance to the stream from which pentecostalism originates, not even the great fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the last hundred years (Barr 1977:208; Sheppard 1984).

Although the immediate historical antecedents of the pentecostal movement are the nineteenth century Holiness groups, it is their theological father, John Wesley, and the Anabaptists who provided his inspiration, who have perhaps most contributed to the ethos which pervades the modern movement. The link from Wesley to the Holiness (and thus the pentecostal) movement is well-documented, Dayton (1987) being the most thorough presentation and discussion of its theological implications. However, less has been written in research on pentecostalism on the link between Wesley and the Anabaptists. Yet it is significant that as prominent a descendant of Anabaptism as John Yoder should state so emphatically that pentecostalism 'is in our century the closest parallel to what Anabaptism was in the sixteenth' (Yoder 1967:78).

John Wesley testifies to the influence of the Moravians of Herrnhut, mentioning by name pastor Spangenberg who travelled with him to America (Parker [s.a.]:35-36), and Peter Boehler, who had an immense influence on his spiritual destiny (:56-62). After his own conversion experience Wesley spent a number of weeks in Germany with the Moravians and other Pietists (:65) Although the Moravians are generally considered among the Pietists, and therefore part of the historical or Reformation churches, the influences at Herrnhut were strongly separatist. Indeed the group which gathered around von Zinzendorf were to a great extent the remnant of the Moravian Church, which though nominally Calvinist owed much to the influence of the earlier Anabaptist movement (Balke 1977:3-4 mentions Jacob Hutter, Walker 1970:331-332 mentions Hutter with Hubmaier and Hans Hut - before them were Wycliffe and Huss: the original Moravian church was essentially Hussite (Walker 1970:273-274, 450-453)). It may be ascribed to their influence that Wesley and his followers were not

easily assimilated into episcopal Anglicanism, nor into presbyterian and Calvinist Puritanism (whose adherents Wesley lightly derided as 'serious men'[5]). Wesley himself shared the typically Anabaptist concern that Pietism (including that of his Moravian contemporaries) sometimes laid too much stress on the subjective side of personal salvation, and insufficient upon the written word and a life of obedience (:459).[6]

Despite similarities in ethos between the two movements, there is a paucity of pentecostal research into Anabaptism. Turner (1985) takes Anabaptism seriously as a pentecostal antecedent, and with Nichol (1966:2-3) indicates that pentecostals derive values from both the 'official' and 'radical' arms of the Reformation. Shuman (1996) discusses Yoder's views on pacifism, and his criticisms of political affinities in the church, thereby appearing to tacitly recognise pentecostalism's links to Anabaptist (and pre-Constantinian) values. Although Bruner (1970:35) includes Anabaptists in the historical line of pentecostal antecedents, he limits his consideration of the values inherited by pentecostals firstly to Montanism (:36-37), and then to John Wesley and the Methodist/Holiness movement (:37ff). Land (1993:47ff) limits his consideration of the roots of pentecostal spirituality to the input of Wesleyanism and African-American Christianity, while acknowledging the input of Pietism and Puritanism. Dayton (1987) limits his own interest in pentecostal roots to Wesley and the Holiness groups that succeeded Methodism, while also acknowledging Pietist and Puritan contributions. Burgess (1994:56-58) also limits his interest into pentecostal antecedents and their implications for pentecostal values to Wesleyanism and the Holiness movements. Faupel (1996:17) states specifically that the theological roots of pentecostalism are to be found in developments in the American church, social and political situations of the 19th century. Hollenweger links the rise of American pentecostalism to the Holiness movement (1970:21), of British pentecostalism to the Welsh revival and its Methodist roots (1970:176-184), of German pentecostalism to the Evangelical movement (1970:218-225), and the South African movement to the Presbyterian preacher, Andrew Murray, and to Dowie's Holiness group (1970:111-120). Robeck (1993) and Lapoorta and Goff in their responses in the same volume, limit their discussion primarily to the events immediately preceding Azusa Street, with some reference to the Holiness roots of Pentecostalism. Since many of these writers focus on the socio-political implications of pentecostal antecedents, it is remarkable that they do not include the history of the radical and

alternative Reformation in their research, and investigate its marked parallels to pentecostalism more fully. The recent *rapprochement* between Moltmann and pentecostals may contribute to a change in attitude in this respect.[7]

2.2 The radical Reformers and the Bible

The theme of this study requires particularly an investigation into the role of Scripture and the way it was used in the radical Reformation. Although there are many similarities between the Anabaptists of Southern Germany, Switzerland and Austria, and their more militant contemporaries in North Germany, there were also some significant differences[8]. The southern group rejected the employment of force in their disputes with Protestant leaders and magistrates[9], and although they were apparently aware of spiritual gifts such as prophecy[10], they did not elevate them to a normative position comparable to Scripture (Wenger 1957:174-175).

Turner lists 6 crucial areas in which the radical Reformers differed from the official Reformation with regard to Scripture:

> .... they placed greater stress on the New Testament than upon the Old; they also insisted on obedience, as well as faith, with its resulting lifestyle; in addition the 'radicals' were more insistent on a *literal interpretation* of the Bible text; they placed more emphasis on the individual conscience, rather than the decision of magistrates, hence the issue of separation of church and state. Added to this was their understanding that the church of the New Testament was a believers' church, therefore a conscious experience of divine grace (the 'new birth') was a condition of membership. This latter issue focused on believers' baptism, and on the Lord's Supper served by the hierarchy and by other believers as well.
>
> (Turner 1985:18)

Davis highlights the similarities between the radical Reformation and the twentieth century pentecostal movement, in agreement with Yoder's comment above:

> All the classical conditions for a charismatic, prophetic outburst were present in the 16th century. Religious fervour was coupled with crisis and opposition from the establishment. There was need for self-authenticated leadership, coupled with a desire for pastoral self-determination and independence, especially in the rural parishes. It was

> also a back to original, biblical Christianity movement, including apostolic, primitive church order, not only as in Acts, but also in I Cor 12 and 14, both of which are highly charismatic.
>
> (Davis 1977:37)

The Anabaptists were remarkable for the love and knowledge of the Bible which was found at all levels among their membership:

> The Anabaptists were distinguished by a diligent study of the Scriptures from the moment of their conversion.
>
> ..... untrained lay brethren often proved more than a match for the Roman Catholic doctors of theology who interrogated them. So overwhelming was this proficiency in the Scriptures that it was sometimes explained as being due to demon possession.
>
> (Wenger 1957:167)

Bender notes in this regard:

> The Anabaptists, being biblicists and usually unsophisticated readers of the Bible, not trained theologians or scholars, and having made a more complete break with tradition than the Reformers, were more radical and consistent in their application of the principle of sole Scriptural authority.
>
> (quoted by Wenger 1957:171)

Kraus (1979a:173) describes Anabaptism as a radical, Jesus-centred, martyr movement. He continues:

> Anabaptism as a whole was Jesus-centred rather than Bible centred. As central as the Bible was for them, it remained a tool, a witness to Jesus Christ and not an end in itself. It was not so much a sacred book of revealed theology as an inspired witness to Jesus Christ. Thus they were not primarily concerned about theories of inspiration and inerrancy. Rather they accepted it as an authentic reflection of Jesus and asked what it would mean to obey it. They assumed its authority because they took for granted that it was an accurate report of Jesus' ministry and teaching. Menno held, for example, that the apostle's message had authority because it was the teaching they received from Jesus. By the same token they tended to give more emphasis to the gospels than to the epistles.
>
> (Kraus 1979a:173-74)[11]

Littell (1964:47) describes the attitude of Anabaptism to the church as a form of *primitivism*. The early church was to Anabaptists the age of heroes. However, they also looked to a great

restitution of the church which had fallen from this pre-Constantinian ideal. Thus there was interwoven into their ideology both the backward look and the forward hope, both reactionary and conservative elements, as well as revolutionary fervour.

> This primitivism, in its Anabaptist type, involves a view of the church and its place in history which explosively combines both reactionary and radical features. In its determined Restitution of the type and style of the Early Church, Anabaptism in fact introduced quite new elements in Christian history. Although the heroic period of the faith is taken as normative, the forerunners of the Free Church way departed radically from patterns of 'magisterial Protestantism' which had obtained for more than a millennium.
>
> (Littell 1964:53-54)

This is a mindset and hermeneutical approach which is familiar to the modern pentecostal. Similarity between the groups extends into the realm of spirituality and spiritual gifts. The large majority of Anabaptists found common ground with the more conservative and orthodox Montanism reflected in Tertullian, and thus rejected the individualists such as Münzer and the so-called 'spiritualists' (Davis 1977:38). However, they insisted on the right of the laity to bring forth inspired utterances in their gatherings, similar to prophecies heard in pentecostal congregations (:39). At the same time, they denied *normative* authority to dreams and visions, as well as to other inspired utterances (Wenger 1957:174-175). They did not see personal revelation as *new* revelation, but as supplementary to the content of Scripture (Davis 1977:38). Although biblicistic, they were not so to the extent that they elevated portions of Scripture to a legal *code* for believers, e g not taking money on a journey (Wenger 1957:176).

The biblicism of the radical Reformation led to the rejection of the church-state synthesis of Roman theology, and its perpetuation under the classical Reformers (Yoder 1957:97-98; Peachey 1977). This rejection was probably the single greatest factor in their persecution by Reformers such as Luther, Zwingli and Melancthon.[12]

Davis shows how the Anabaptist Conrad Grebel was influenced by Tertullian. This was reflected in his insistence on a clear conversion experience, on pietistic fervour and charismatic manifestations, on a lifestyle of commitment, renunciation of social status, and opposition to military service for Christians (Davis 1977:39).[13] Perhaps the single great difference between

the radical Reformers and Tertullian was Tertullian's use of an allegorical approach to the Scriptures: otherwise they were in broad agreement with him that the Bible was a *way* which needed to be followed by means of renunciation and discipline.[14]

There are thus many points of identification and commonality between grass-roots Anabaptists and their pentecostal counterparts today. This only becomes obscured when the phenomenon of 'tongues' becomes *the* identifying mark of twentieth century pentecostalism[15], since this charismatic manifestation is not consistently reported among the radical Reformers. If, then, the ethos of the Montanist Tertullian[16] and the Anabaptist dissidents is so congruent to those of the pentecostal, then some elements of the approach to Scripture found amongst them could be crucial to the development of a consistent hermeneutic for pentecostals.

2.3 The Wesleyan approach to Scripture

Dayton (1985) discusses the Wesleyan approach to Scripture from the point of view of its relationship to modern evangelicalism. He shows that the major concerns of the Wesleyan tradition have coincided with neither those of the great protestant traditions, nor those of the modern conservative (or fundamentalist) evangelical:

> Unfortunately, historians of doctrine and theology have most often stood in the Reformation tradition and have concluded that Wesleyanism made no lasting theological contribution because its legacy was not one of speculative theology..... But this is to miss much of the point. Wesley's mode of doing theology differed from theirs, but it was no less theological or rigorous. Wesley plumbed the whole of the Christian tradition and the Scriptures, but bent this work to practical rather than speculative purposes - to issues of the shape of Christian life and existence.
>
> (Dayton 1985:128)

Dayton gives a number of reasons for believing that the Wesleyan use of Scripture is not easily assimilated in the fundamentalist paradigm, most of which will be relevant to a later argument. However, two in particular are relevant here:

1. The Wesleyan movement was the first major religious development after the

Enlightenment - this meant that it took a different approach to *reason*. There was a sympathy with the notion that Pietism and Enlightenment criticism shared similar concerns vis-a-vis the vast dogmatic systems of protestant orthodoxy. Fundamentalism, on the other hand, often seems more bent on defending these systems (Dayton 1985:131-132);

2. The Wesleyans not only had a different approach to reason, but also shared in the *historical consciousness* of the Enlightenment. This made them more amenable to the ideas of relativity and change in the human situation. Dayton shows how this enabled them to condone the ministry of women, compared to the ahistorical biblicism of those conservatives who have balked at this issue (Dayton 1985:133)

Spittler argues that it was the conciliation between evangelicals and pentecostals in North America after the Second World War that led to the importation into pentecostal churches of fundamentalist and other conservative evangelical concerns (Spittler 1985:58-60).[17] This is the argument of Sheppard, who maintains that the dispensationalist and fundamentalist approach to Scripture was not part of early pentecostalism (Sheppard 1984:5) Others have shown that Wesley's use of Scripture is also not easily comprehended in the context of the debate surrounding fundamentalist concerns.[18]

The Holiness movements of North America have been strongly rooted in the values of Methodism. Although they were more influenced by Baptist thinking in their sacramental practice, they anticipated a 'second work' of the Holy Spirit after regeneration. This the early pentecostals from their ranks understood as the baptism in the Holy Spirit [19]. In South Africa the strong emphasis on healing in Dowie's Zion Christian Church (a Holiness group) at the end of the nineteenth century made the group an ideal vehicle for the spread of the pentecostal message throughout the land. In fact the early formation of the AFM in South Africa was greatly facilitated by the joining of the Zion congregations *en masse* with the new movement (Burger 1990:109-117; De Wet 1989:37-39). Racial intolerance led to the mass withdrawal of the black Zionist members in 1919, and the formation of what is today the single largest

indigenous African church in South Africa, the Zion Christian Church (which still emphasises deliverance and healing).

A search for a viable pentecostal hermeneutic will thus take note of the concerns and values of early Methodism. Wesley's Anglican background (although he came from a strongly Non-conformist home) may also be responsible for a number of elements in the relationship of pentecostals to other denominations. Pentecostals have often appeared to find it easier to identify with Anglican (and even Roman Catholic) piety than with protestant: the ease with which the current Roman Catholic- pentecostal dialogue continues may be proof of this, while the very fact of that dialogue is upsetting to many fundamentalist evangelicals. The successful interaction between delegates at the ICCOWE *Brighton '91* conference, in which the main sub-divisions were Roman Catholic, Protestant (mainly Anglican) and Pentecostal-charismatic, is an additional argument. It is also noticeable that since the beginning of the penetration of the pentecostal experience into the historical churches in the early 1960's, it is the fundamentalists (including most conservative evangelicals) who have most resisted charismatic phenomena, while Anglicans, Episcopalians, Methodists and Roman Catholics have been at the forefront of the renewal. It is probable that this resistance is largely due to their dispensationalist theology (thus Meloon 1971), which leads to a belief that God performed the miraculous *then*, but does not do so *now*. Möller contends against such a point of view (1975:67-87), which has been prevalent in the rejection of pentecostalism by many Reformed theologians in South Africa.

2.4 The nature of the pentecostal ethos in the light of these antecedents

While the search for a pentecostal hermeneutic belongs and has been conducted primarily within the Biblical sciences of Old and New Testament (cf. chapter 1, note 1), the search for pentecostal distinctives or *propria* has been pursued more within the realm of doctrinal or systematic theology. It has also been addressed by many non-pentecostals and scholars from a charismatic background, and for these reasons a full survey of such a diverse field cannot be credibly maintained within the scope of this research in this theological subject.[20] However,

in so far as there has been a consensus among scholars, the findings of that debate as it stands at present are essential to this work, since a *viable* pentecostal hermeneutic will be consistent with the nature of the movement and its ethos.

In the context of this research the term *ethos* best expresses the notion and essence of pentecostalism that is brought to the topic. Terms such as *proprium*, *world-view*, and *distinctive* imply a particularity and precision which it is difficult to attribute to the pentecostal movement in particular. However, *ethos* denotes something more general, an underlying set of values and tenets which are not always easy to define, which are more often sensed than empirically observed, applied rather than articulated. This elusiveness becomes obvious in most scholarly works on pentecostalism, since no theological or confessional comprehension of the movement ever appears to truly capture in words the essence of the dynamic underlying it.[21]

Some significant recent contributions to the discussion on the pentecostal ethos are enumerated and discussed below:

1. A popular approach to understanding pentecostalism is outlined in detail by Dayton (1987). This is the attempt to comprehend the movement in terms of one of its earliest 'confessions': Jesus Christ: Saviour, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and Coming King - the so-called *Four-square formula*.[22] Dayton shows how the particular logic and combination of these themes had their origins in the Holiness and Methodist movements of the century preceding the beginning of pentecostalism. This formula implies that the pentecostal movement is at heart more Christological than pneumatological, and that its Christology implies a dynamic Christ, who is currently and consistently saving, healing and baptising in the Holy Spirit, and whose imminent return supplies urgency to pentecostal preaching and missions. This Christ is thus understood as the personal subject of *experienced* theology, viz evangelistic (Saviour), charismatic and supernatural (Healer), pneumatological (Baptizer in the Spirit) and eschatological (Coming King).

The Four-square understanding of pentecostalism invites a further understanding of the movement as a *discipleship* movement. Christ, the great Subject, is the Master who is to be

followed and obeyed. This obedience is extremely literalistic, and is obvious in the overwhelming pentecostal choice for baptism of believers by immersion, and in the obedience to Christ's command to 'Go!' as evidenced in the growth, from the very first, of pentecostal missions and evangelism.[23] Scholars who study pentecostalism note the literalistic and emulative way in which the New Testament scriptures are adopted by pentecostals. Dayton (1987:23-24) refers to the 'subjectivizing hermeneutic' which seeks to appropriate the narratives of Scripture in personal emulation: 'The movement's distinctive way of reading the New Testament leads it to the conclusion that, as in the early church, the modern believer becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ and receives the fullness of the Spirit's baptism in separate events and "experiences"' (Dayton 1987:24). Hollenweger (1972:291-297) categorises the simplistic and literalistic interpretations of the Bible that have permeated pentecostalism under the heading 'fundamentalistic'. He notes that the pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Spirit is the result of dependence upon a literalistic approach to the Lukan material of the New Testament (:336-337).

This approach to Scripture leads to some of the most basic elements of the pentecostal ethos: the use of *narrative* as didactic for experience and the notion that the history of God with his people, as narrated in Scripture, still continues now, in the same manner and accompanied by similar phenomena. The narratives are understood literally, and are taken to be replicable, and emulation of the Biblical characters and experiences not only possible but desirable. Pentecostalism shares the primitivism of other movements such as Montanism and Anabaptism: the notion that the early church of the first century has somehow been polluted by events, and that the contemporary movement is a restoration of a pristine community. Hence the notions of 'Latter Rain' and 'Age of the Spirit' that have been used to identify the movement (Dayton 1987:26-28; Bruner 1970:26-29).

2. Land chooses to understand pentecostalism from the point of view of its *spirituality* rather than as an *addendum* to some other stream of Christianity.[24] He sees the major challenge to the movement to lie in the integration of holiness and power, both of which are the work of the Holy Spirit (Land 1993:23). To orthodoxy and orthopraxy should be added the realm of the affections, orthopathy. 'Spirituality is defined as the integration of beliefs and practices in the

affections which are themselves evoked and expressed by those beliefs and practices' (:13).[25] He identifies as major (but not the only) affections gratitude, compassion and courage, and propounds an understanding of these based upon the notion of apocalypticism that underlies pentecostalism (:136-161). He argues for a re-vision of pentecostalism by pentecostals, especially theologians, based upon what the spirituality of the movement was in its early years, rather than upon what it has become (:190ff). Land expresses within the pentecostal movement that primitivism with which pentecostals have observed church history in general: 'Agreeing with Walter Hollenweger that the first ten years of the Pentecostal movement form the heart not the infancy of the spirituality...' (:13). Land's work is thus hortatory to pentecostalism, expressing the desire to return to a time that once was. The importance of the work for pentecostalism is the affirmation that pentecostal theology is not easily assimilable nor reducible to any other stream of theology, nor can it be adequately comprehended in the mere written word, a literary theology.[26]

Building on the emphases of Land and others (e g McQueen 1995 and Moore 1995, who offer 'spiritual' readings of Old Testament works), it can be argued that pentecostal spirituality and the notion of discipleship imply a strong emphasis upon *obedience* and *morality*. The pentecostal is a disciple, a pilgrim, a stranger among and to the values and ways of the world. Hollenweger (1972:399-410) offers a negative evaluation of pentecostal legalism and ethical rigorism, and sees these as derived from personal preparation for the eschatological wedding day of Christ, and therefore contain little benefit to or interest in one's fellow human. However, when the Methodist/Holiness and Anabaptist roots of the movement are taken into consideration, this rigorism could be understood to be based upon both the notion of separation (holiness) and of grateful obedience to the Saviour. I have elsewhere dealt with this aspect in terms of commitment to Jesus Christ: Commitment to his person, to a lifestyle pleasing to him, and to his mission (Clark & Lederle 1989:55-60). This commitment flows only from a deep and radical encounter with the power of God in Christ:

> Where this perspective upon separation from the world has been maintained in genuinely transformed lives, the spectre of legalism has been avoided. However, as successive generations have taken over (or had forced on them!) the outward signs of this alienation from the world, without re-interpreting in terms of their own generation

> and commitment to Christ what holy living should look like, a meaningless conformity to a system of often incomprehensible values has led to a sub-culture which has nothing of Christ to say to the world.
>
> (Clark & Lederle 1989:56-57)

3. Faupel (1996) has highlighted the essentiality of eschatological expectation for pentecostalism, from its beginnings. He notes the contribution made to the development of a pentecostal ethos by the names adopted for itself by the movement in its earliest forms. These include: *Full Gospel* (Faupel 1996:28-30), which brought with it the notions of justification, sanctification, healing, Second Coming and Spirit-baptism; *Latter Rain* (:30-36), which was accompanied by the framework of historical understanding by which pentecostals understand their place in the world - a renewal of God's salvation history with humanity at the end of times; *Apostolic Faith* (:36-40), which brought to the pentecostal movement the notion of restoration of the church in the end-times, in terms of power and effectiveness; and *Pentecostal* (:40-41) which brought a focus upon the events of Acts 2, in terms of the inauguration of a new dispensation of God's power, and in terms of a repeatable event in each individual believer's life. Faupel also describes the influence of the forerunners or Elijah-personalities on the early revival (:115-186). These include Dowie (with, it might be noted, an emphasis on healing that shaped the South African pentecostal movement in particular), Sandford, and Parham. The central theme that Faupel distinguishes in all of these influences is the *eschatological*. This had developed in the mid-19th century in America, where the original post-millennialism of the Wesleyan Perfectionist movement had gradually moved to a pre-millennial position (:91ff). This forward-looking orientation made pentecostalism essentially an *apocalyptic* movement, a term described in detail in this context by Mills (1976). This expectation has gone through various transformations in Western pentecostalism, with a strong dispensationalist perspective being supplied by proponents of e g Larkin (Land 1993:193-194 attributes this to waning apocalyptic fervour); and a totally different perspective being supplied by the radical realised eschatology of the Faith Movement of Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland (as described by Horn 1989). The apocalyptic perspective sponsors alienation from the world as a system, and the maintenance of alternative values which are based not upon *now* (already), but upon *then* (later, not yet). Like Anabaptism, pentecostalism thus contains the seeds both

of conservatism (faithfulness to a master and his commands) and of revolution (a disdain for the self-congratulatory princes and powers of the world that in its extreme forms borders on contempt and rejection.) However, it has also supplied the spur to action, in that the sense of the imminent coming of Christ leads not only to a life of separation, but also to urgent missionary action. The New Testament apocalypticism that pentecostalism rediscovered is not the conservative and inward-looking separatism of e g the Qumran communities, but the extrovert kerygmatic and missionary impulse of the apostolic church. This eschatological emphasis has also provided a corrective to those ascetic tendencies which many moralistic groups experience, in that no pentecostal believer, no matter how concerned for personal holiness and perfection, can turn a blind eye to the 'multitude of lost and dying souls' around them.

4. Anderson (1991 & 1992) has presented the first well-researched South African pentecostal investigation into the *African* understanding of the power of the Holy Spirit: *Moya*.[27] His conversation partners from the Southern African context are such well-known scholars in this field as Daneel, Oosthuizen and Sundkler.[28] His sympathetic treatment not only shows how difficult it is for those imbued with traditional Western theological methodology to comprehend or appreciate the contribution of African Christianity to Christian theology, but also challenges pentecostals to recognise the contribution of the African roots of pentecostalism to many of its own distinctives: holism (Anderson 1991:26-29; 100-104), its understanding of prophets and prophecy in both the Old and New Testament contexts (:104-113), the role of 'anointed and powerful' leadership (:115-116), leading of the Spirit (:108-110), healing and miracles(:117-120), body-movement in worship (:27), etc. While he concentrates more in the first work (Anderson 1991) on the African Initiated Churches, in the second (Anderson 1992) he discusses in detail the history and characteristics of the classical pentecostal denominations in the African context (whose people call themselves *bazalwane* - Zulu for *koinonia*, a group of people closely related to one another by virtue of a common calling and task). He considers the spirituality of these churches (which at that time were separate 'daughter' churches to their white counterparts of the same denomination) to contain elements of escapism from the political realities of South Africa (1992:118). Whatever *caveats* this evaluation might inspire, his summary of the movement would probably tally with the nature of many indigenous

pentecostal groups in non-Western cultures:

> African Pentecostalism has Africanised Christian liturgy in a free and spontaneous way that does not betray its essential Christian character, and liberates it from the foreignness of European forms. African Pentecostals are among the most committed churchgoers in the townships. They have experienced the living Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit; and their lives have been radically changed as a result. This conversion, or 'born again' experience as the *bazalwane* call it, has so transformed their lives that they do not have time for traditional practices. Unlike any other church group they have almost unanimously rejected the ancestor cult and traditional divination; and they also spurn the use of beer and tobacco. This indicates the radical break from their past that their conversion represents. They are aggressive evangelists, adding members to their churches at a rapid rate, often at the expense of other churches, especially the mission churches.
>
> (Anderson 1992:119-120)

5. Johns (1995:88ff) has described the characteristics of the pentecostal world-view as being: God-centred, holistic, trans-rational (going beyond orthodoxy to orthopathy and orthopraxy), and apocalyptic. Within this basic paradigm other elements come into play: Scripture plays a major role, facilitating encounter with God, understanding of the world, and functioning as a link with God's people and God's presence in the world; pentecostals are more inclined toward action than reflection; they are resistant to bureaucratic authority; they have a paradoxical view of power, stressing personal power as well as surrender of power to God; and they have a strong sense of needing to separated from a world which is passing away. In 1995:95 he propounds a pentecostal paradigm as follows:

Essence and core of knowledge:	*yada* (knowing God), covenant, encounter and affections:
A priori metaphor:	Story/revelation
Foundation of understanding:	Tradition
Primary approach to truth:	Community and rituals

He shows how this differs from General Systems Theory (his model for comprehending the movement from modernism to post-modernism) in every detail, and maintains that the pentecostal paradigm is pentecost itself, and that the movement thus cannot easily be defined

in terms of the philosophical paradigms of the late twentieth century.

6. Goff (1988) highlights the commitment to *mission* that was evident in the early Pentecostal movement. He also notes that the various *foci* of emergent pentecostal theology had their parallels in social forces and events in 19th century America:

> Biblicism reflected alienation from modernist thought. Holiness theology presupposed, at least in part, dislocation from contemporary lifestyles. The attractiveness of divine healing in American society revealed the presence of both physical and psychological pain. Millenarianism prospered on the heels of political discontent as campaigns and candidates gave way to a spiritual rendition of social justice.
>
> (Goff 1988:165)

These spiritual and social forces brought together people from a multiplicity of backgrounds, and the early movement was racked by theological and racial tensions which led to numerous schisms. Faupel (1996:259-260) outlines the variety of backgrounds of the earliest leaders, and notes that the positions they adopted in terms of the pentecostal understanding of salvation and pneumatology were not necessarily linked to their previous theological orientation. North America today still exhibits major pentecostal groupings (Holiness, One-ness and classical groups all being well-represented), while in South Africa the One-ness and Holiness groups form a very small minority. A much larger alternative grouping in this country is the Zionist group (some elements of which have their basis in Dowie's movement), and also a large variety of other African Pentecostal-type churches. These are discussed in detail in terms of their relationship to classical pentecostalism in Anderson 1993.

These views on the nature or ethos of pentecostalism are not exhaustive, but are hopefully representative of the evaluation of the movement made by those from within its own ranks or those who are extremely close to it. It could be adequately summarised as a radical (apocalyptic, obedient, discipleship), Jesus-centred (the Four-square formula), martyr (sacrificial, urgent witnessing, missionary) movement (not sectarian, but also not nationally, culturally, politically nor liturgically coherent as a single denomination), the same descriptors

applied by Kraus (1979:173-175) to Anabaptism. The single strongest differential between pentecostalism and Anabaptism might be the more comprehensive attributes accorded the Christ who is encountered and followed as a disciple follows a master. These are articulated in the Four-square formula (and particularly the notion of Baptizer in the Spirit) whose theological development Dayton (1987) has traced through the centuries between the Reformation and the origin of the pentecostal movement. While pentecostalism shares its notions of ethical rigorism in discipleship with both the Radical Reformers and the Montanist Tertullian, it relates more specifically to the Montanist period than to the Anabaptist in its emphasis on the power and revelation of the Holy Spirit.[29]

The ethos of pentecostalism which will be utilised in this study as a basis upon which a viable pentecostal hermeneutic could be established, can thus be summarised as the ethos of a *radical alternative* movement.[30] (These descriptors, together with the sense of being Jesus-centred and a witnessing community, will be referred to - as a consensus pentecostal ethos - in the rest of this research, rather than the particular contribution or insight offered by each of the pentecostal scholars enumerated above.) As in the case of the notions of Tertullian, the tenets of the Anabaptists, and the values of the early pentecostals, the movement has provided a unique alternative to its contemporary streams in both secular and religious society. In terms of the church it has been a restorational movement; in terms of theology and lifestyle it has been a reaction to perceived shortcomings of interpretation and commitment. As such a radical alternative it stands in the tradition of the early church and what it offered in contrast to paganism; in the tradition of the carpenter from Nazareth and what he offered in contrast to contemporary Judaism; and with the charismatic leaders of Israel who offered their contemporaries a radical alternative perspective upon the God of Israel and his dealings with humanity.[31]

The ethos of pentecostalism is *radical* because underlying it is a powerful and shattering personal encounter with the God of the Bible.[32] This encounter, and the commitment and obedience to Scripture that it engenders, undermines all previous categories and brings into existence a group whose primary description of themselves is not nationally, culturally nor economically conditioned, but spiritually.[33] This radicalism is a challenge to pentecostal

scholarship is many areas, not least hermeneutics. It provides the basis for a critical approach to all *shibboleths*, no matter of what authority, origin or fashionability. It provides a basis for examining and evaluating all other notions of radicalism.[34]

The ethos of pentecostalism is *alternative* because it confronts and challenges its contemporaries in church as well as secular society. As Tertullian evidently saw in Montanism an alternative spirituality and morality; as the Anabaptists pleaded with their contemporaries to be different from the powers and forces at work among the nations and to turn to what they considered to be committed Bible-based discipleship of Jesus; as the Wesleyans offered an alternative morality and spirituality to their age, which would provide the moral and religious basis for the emancipation of slaves, the curtailment of exploitative labour practices of the Industrial Revolution, and the moral renewal of the British Empire; so pentecostals represent an alternative morality and spirituality to twentieth century church and society. The radicalism of the pentecostal ethos is not confined to the negative (the critical) or to focusing upon *difference* to the exclusion of *commonalities*, but it also ushers in a positive, a visible alternative which finds expression in commitment, lifestyle, spirituality, spiritual power, theological method and experience.

The expression of this radical alternative needs to heed the dangers of un-Christian separatism and arrogance, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Clark & Lederle 1989:104-105). It is not the purpose of this study to antagonise either non-pentecostals nor pentecostals who do not share the appreciation of the depth and implications of such a radical alternative. However, it is a perspective which will be consistently maintained in the following pages in search of a hermeneutic which could be termed 'viable' in the context of the pentecostal movement and its ethos.

2.5 The development of protestant church values in hermeneutics in Europe.

If the historical and theological roots of the pentecostal movement follow a line in which Tertullian, the Anabaptists and Wesleyanism were major role players, then it is probable that the values and concerns of the movement will today be as different from those of the European

protestant theological establishment as were its forerunners from the mainstream church(es) of their day. Viewed from this 'outside' position, it could be argued that many developments in and concerns of Christian hermeneutics in the historical churches in Europe are not always relevant to the vision and mission of pentecostals.

The choice the major Reformers made against the thorough-going radicalism of the so-called Left-wing set the classical Reformation upon a course which differed in many respects from the early church in terms of theology. The particular issue underlying what the Reformers considered deviance was the rejection by the Anabaptists of the church-state synthesis (Yoder 1957:97-98; Peachy 1977). The medieval relationship of the church to princes and powers was largely unchanged by the Reformers - in fact any substantive change was considered seditious. Thus Luther assented to the execution (urged by Melancthon) of even pacifist Anabaptists, on the grounds that their rejection of the synthesis (the 'territorial church') contained at least the seeds of sedition (Bainton [s.a]:375-378). Likewise Zwingli saw in the rejection of child-baptism by Grebel and the Anabaptists the unacceptable separation of church and state - and took harsh measures against them (Blanke 1957:59-60; Potter 1976: 171; 186-187). The classical Reformation moved into the 'Age of Orthodoxy', while the Anabaptists as a coherent grouping were virtually eradicated in Europe.

It might be argued that a distinction should be made between the theology of the great Reformers themselves and their theological heirs. While the Reformers such as Zwingli and Luther were involved in intense theological and political debate, with their main tool in the struggle being *biblical exegesis*, the theologians of Orthodoxy were challenged primarily by systematisation and categorisation - the much less dynamic world of *church dogmatics* (Roussouw 1963:271ff). However, many contemporary researchers into Anabaptism argue that it was the great Reformers themselves who formulated the break with Anabaptist thinking, beginning as early as 1523 in the disputes between Grebel and Zwingli (e g Yoder, Peachey, Wenger, Bender, Davis, cited above). Hence the Anabaptist resistance to the 'incomplete' reformation of Luther, Zwingli and later of Calvin. Thus the divergence in ethos and values between the radical Reformation and its classical parallel is seminal and not merely derived.

The context in which European church theology was now done may have subsequently benefitted from the 'liberalism' of the Renaissance, but its interest was still primarily in itself. The mark of personal religion in the period subsequent to the Reformation was primarily a specific confession of faith, whether Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, or any other variant. Believers were distinguished *primarily* by what system of doctrine they confessed, not by the demands of a particular lifestyle.[35] One result of this was the numerous ongoing religious wars. During this time of upheaval and often of disillusionment, theologians of the great Age of Orthodoxy refined and embellished the doctrinal positions of the Reformers.

Pietism was largely a reaction *within* this system and method of doing theology. It aimed at making Christianity relevant not only to the head but also to the heart. However it did not really succeed in any serious reform of the protestant system, neither could it claim to have had a truly *revolutionary* impact. Certainly Francke and Spener had an influence on popular piety within the German churches,[36] but this was largely limited to their own time (Walker 1970:449). Their insistence on non-separation from the German churches makes it difficult to gauge their numerical impact. It may be argued that Pietism's single greatest accomplishment was to set the stage (by reason of the emphasis by their leaders such as Spener and Francke on education and study) for the great dichotomy between faith and reason which was nurtured into fullness by the Enlightenment. Pietism did make a major contribution *outside* of the protestant mainstream, in the lives of the Wesleys and the missionary fervour of the Moravians. However, as I have argued above, much of this was due to the strong Anabaptist influence on the Moravian Pietists. Both the Wesleyan and Moravian movements *were* separatist, or rather, *separated* (by developments in contemporary church and society) from the protestant mainstream in their respective areas. Perhaps for this reason, unfettered by ecclesiastical disapproval and opposition, they achieved a more visible impact on their social environment. This unsought separation (in the case of the Methodists at least) is mirrored in the early twentieth century in the reluctant departure of the early pentecostals from their own denominations of origin.

The Enlightenment might be viewed as the natural reaction of the European intellectual world against the sterility of protestant dogmatism and authoritarianism; in fact, a parallel to the

rebellion of Renaissance art, science and philosophy against the stifling authority of the medieval church. That Pietists initially found common cause with Enlightenment rationalists cannot be denied. However, after the Enlightenment the sword of the 'religion of the heart' appears to have passed into the hands of forces largely outside the protestant world of continental Europe: the Evangelicals of Methodism, and the Free churches who had largely fled Europe for the liberties of North America (Stoeffler 1973:x; Walker 1970:430-436).

Fundamental to the developing controversies within the church in post-Enlightenment Europe, and to the contrast between that church and the great revival movements of the last two and a half centuries, has been the notion of *history* which has been accepted within protestant theology. The historical awareness of the Westerner today is usually attributed to the Enlightenment. However, it was the *positivist* view of history which prevailed among the philosophers of history and science during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Richardson 1964:109-118; Morgan & Barton 1988:89; Raven 1955:25). The tension between *this* view of history and the notion of divine revelation and supernatural intervention has determined the struggle by the theology (and biblical interpretation in particular) of the historical churches of Western Europe to maintain itself as a *science*, as worthwhile intellectual effort, as a meaningful pursuit. In doing so it has at times allowed the notions of *what is scientific* and *what is history* to be defined according to a philosophy (positivism) which has been found wanting by historians since the late nineteenth century, and by natural scientists since Einstein in the twentieth.

According to the positivist approach to history, not only is human experience of the present determinative of what could have happened in the past, but the science of investigating the past (including that which attempts to interpret texts from the past) should be pursued according to the rules applied in the natural sciences. The *empirical* approach was considered particularly relevant here (Raven 1955:33 and Heron 1980:6-8 outline the positivistic presuppositions used in the empirical approach in the natural sciences). This insistence has been felt in popular culture until today, and has been the mark of the 'modern' thinking which has dominated Western philosophies up to the time of the rise of post-modernism in popular culture (the late 1960's).

> Positivism .... was philosophy, though it masqueraded as science; it was based upon the now out-moded notions of the nineteenth century concerning the nature and procedures of science, and consequently has lost much of its original appeal; but it still lives on as an ingrained habit of thought among uncritical minds. One of the genuinely ideological assumptions of Western society today is that truth as such is that which has been established by scientific method of the type which has been so successful in natural science: everything else, such as religious truth, artistic standards, ethical norms, is a matter of 'opinion' and will remain so until 'science' (especially psychology and the social sciences) is in a position to settle questions about religion and human destiny definitively. The temper of our times is in this sense positivistic.
>
> (Richardson 1964:110)[37]

This 'tyranny' of the positivist view of history has dominated the attempts of Christian theology in Europe to find a point of contact with the modern Western mind, to make itself 'relevant' to its contemporary culture (e g Heron 1980:104 on Bultmann; also Ridderbos 1960:18). Uncritical acceptance of historical positivism was the dynamic behind the so-called Higher Criticism which found expression in the work of, for instance, the Tübingen School. It underlies the expressions of scepticism that permeate much of the modernist and liberal approach to the biblical narrative. The nineteenth century was marked by the search for historical *verification* of the Scriptures, and since this was pursued upon the basis of a positivistic philosophy of history, the Scriptures appeared highly vulnerable to the waves of scepticism which assaulted them.

> The main point ..... is that modern historical scholarship on the Bible is rooted in eighteenth-century rationalist attacks upon Christianity. There is thus some justification for the hostility to it within religious circles.
>
> (Morgan & Barton 1988:17)

Referring particularly to Form Criticism, but relevant too in a wider context, Benoit remarks:

> Behind all these relatively new methods, new at least in their technical application, we discover one fundamental thesis which is not itself new at all. This is the denial of the supernatural which we are so accustomed to meeting in works of modern rationalist criticism. It is a thesis which, once it is stripped of its various masks, literary, historical or sociological analysis, reveals its true identity - it is a philosophical one.
>
> (Benoit 1973:39)

The hermeneutics of Schleiermacher took the challenge of this positivistic view of history seriously, and he applied it in his historical-critical approach to the Scriptures, thereby initiating something of a revolution in Christian theology (Heron 1980:24-27; Richardson 1961:79). However, even at that early stage it was evident that some form of 'escape' was needed if Christian religion were to be allowed to function relevantly (Mackintosh 1937:12). Hence for Schleiermacher the essence of Christianity was not to be found in the historical narratives or their historicity, but in an inward feeling of relationship with God (Richardson 1961:80).[38]

Kierkegaard also theorised along these lines, and was the first to propound the necessity of a 'leap of faith' to find religious relevance (at least) in the Scriptures. (Richardson 1961:50-52; Heron 1980:46-51; Mackintosh 1937:215-219). The Scriptures were in peril of relegation to the sidelines in terms of providing meaningful content to Christian theology. However, after the First World War the so-called neo-orthodox theologians insisted upon the reinstatement of Scripture as the source and norm of theology. This was achieved at the price of almost totally disengaging the content of the Scriptures from the concerns of historical verification (Richardson 1964:131-139; Schaeffer 1968:50-52; Morgan & Barton 1988:94; Mackintosh 1937:289-292). The dialectics of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner allowed them to use the content of Scripture to set out an orthodox Christian theology, while at the same time they left unchallenged the underlying concept and philosophy of history from which they had apparently felt the need to loose the interpretation of Scripture. The authority of the Bible had been rescued, but the implication was that the positivistic view of history remained unchallenged.

Bultmann's programme of demythologisation and reduction of the New Testament to an *existential history* follows the same line (Heron 1980:102-105): the positivism of the concept of history inherited from the previous century goes unchallenged:

> From his fundamental positivistic presuppositions all the characteristic features of Bultmann's theology follow. The demythologisation programme is necessary because the kerygma of the Bible affirms the acts of God in history; But since 'science' knows nothing of the acts of God, the biblical affirmations must be understood as mythological ways of expressing existential truths.
>
> (Richardson 1964:143)

Twentieth century systematic theology owes much to the advent of neo-orthodoxy - it could now work with the Biblical sources *as though* they were ultimately true, at least for 'faith'. Christianity has nevertheless undergone a crisis of relevance, since the modern 'man in the street' has been more concerned with historical and scientific truth than with truth which it was only possible to maintain after a leap of faith. The ultimate crisis of the modern mind, and the modern theologian, is the tension between faith and reason. This qualified attempt to restore faith in the Scriptures has been accompanied by an increasing secularisation in wider society that has culminated in a post-Christian Europe.[39]

It is thus only as the modern mindset gives way at grass-roots level to the post-modern, that this sort of theology and secular Western society appear to find common ground. In the next chapter the implications will be considered of such an acceptance of the post-historicism of post-modernism for a movement such as pentecostalism, a movement which has a strong sense of continuity with God's action in history.

There is little evidence that the European church world itself has been able to fundamentally develop a new or alternative approach to the situation. Ultimately, these churches and secular society share a largely similar view of history, of science, and of Scripture. The most significant recent contributions to the philosophy of hermeneutics have come from outside the church proper. Many theologians today seem to be attempting to find particular application in their systems for the theories of such hermeneutical philosophers and/or literary theorists as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas and Derrida. Although these cannot all be subsumed uncritically under post-modernism, it would appear that one of their prime concerns is to establish a meaningful approach to literary (and other) texts in a context in which 'meaning' is no longer as closely associated with the authors and their intent, or the history of the text, as it was in the modernist paradigm. A more detailed exposition of this evaluation will be found in the following chapter.[40]

An important aspect of this relationship between theological hermeneutics and secular hermeneutical philosophy is that theologians are no longer concerned purely with the question

of 'how can I understand *this text*?', but with the challenge of 'how can I *understand*?', with all the pitfalls of subjectivity taken into consideration (Gräbe 1993:3; Ervin 1985:23ff). Theological hermeneutics has become broad enough to encompass epistemology; this is the route upon which Schleiermacher set it. However, the historical concern (the search for 'objective' meaning) will probably always be as crucial to pentecostal hermeneutics as the epistemological, since *what* is to be learned from the text is as important as *how* it is learned. The pentecostal notion of 'reality' cannot simply be reduced to some form of a-historical or mystical 'spirituality'. Schaeffer (1973:24-27), although not a pentecostal, warns the pentecostal movement against departing from its strong (literalistic) biblical foundation for the temptations of contentless 'experience', and all the theological relativism that implies. Menzies reacts tersely, and for a similar reason (1994:116-117), to the suggestions by fellow-pentecostals that pentecostal hermeneutics consider sympathetically the categories and methodologies of post-modern hermeneutical philosophy[41].

Both within this broad movement of secular hermeneutical philosophies, as well as within church hermeneutics in its own right, a more critical attitude toward the positivist view of history has been developing. Gadamer follows Dilthey in his criticism of attempts to establish truth as communicated in literary texts according to the same method as that used in the natural sciences (Dilthey 1914:1/18; Gadamer 1975:56-61). Stuhlmacher is one of many theologians of the Old and New Testament who feel that the positivist view of history underlying the historical-critical method has been more destructive and alienating than has the application of the method itself (Stuhlmacher 1977; also Kasper 1989). Yet the challenges of faith and reason appear to be still considered widely diverse, as long as reason is understood as linked to a philosophy of science and history which is positivistic.[42] Morgan & Barton (1988:26-33) maintain that a concordat exists at present in modern theology in which the tasks of historian and theologian are considered to be disparate, to the extent that theology (and dogmatics in particular) is pursued without much reference to the often destructive findings of history. Jefferson & Robey (1986:17-18) see this as a characteristic of most contemporary literary theories.[43]

2.6 The pentecostal movement in the light of this history

Pentecostals, because they generally insist that the scriptural narrative be taken seriously as a form of history in which they are playing a present-day role, appear vulnerable to the accumulated deposit of centuries of higher criticism. They appear to have sided with fundamentalism versus modernism.[44] Twentieth century European theologians, because they appear to have escaped the critical scrutiny of positivist historicism, and to have moved the theological debate into the realm of faith and experience, are similarly vulnerable to charges of historical irrelevance. While these two streams seem to have arrived at what is, from the point of view of the science of history, perhaps an identical position, they have done so for totally different reasons, with totally different values, and with totally dissimilar interests. Post-modern literary theory and hermeneutics appears to be attracting interest from pentecostals (cf the debate surrounding the issue in the Fall 1993 and Spring 1994 issues of *Pneuma*), which is entirely understandable. However, if the divergence in history and intent between the pentecostals and post-modernists is not taken seriously, this pathway may well be fraught with peril.

Pentecostalism comes from a line of antecedents which stressed firmly the necessity for Christian engagement in history.[45] Indeed, they have viewed themselves as being products of God's historical action, in the same way as the nation of Israel viewed itself in the Old Testament, and the church of Acts thought of its origin and mission. They have done this in a far more dynamic and eschatologically aware sense than have, for instance, those Reformed theologians who propound covenant theology (a movement well understood and represented among white South Africans in general and among Afrikaners in particular). In solidarity with their antecedents, pentecostals stress their *continuity* with the personal dynamic action of the saving God through the intervention of his Spirit in human history, and that through a called and empowered priesthood of individual believers (not a *volks* or 'peoples' concept, but the notion of personal *discipleship* - the major distinction between the classical and radical Reformers). According to such an ethos, if the believer is to continue to exemplify the ongoing history of God with and through his people; if the light and salt of God are to be revealed in the lives of believers; then Christians are called to lives of discipline and obedience

- to a definite and meaningful history and engagement in history.

Tertullian and the Anabaptists identified with these values. Tertullian's major point of divergence from the Catholic church of his day centred on the role of the charismata and the alternative lifestyle of the believer. The Anabaptists did not wish to passively experience human history - they wished to engage in it, as representatives of God. They wished the Reformed churches of the sixteenth century to consciously link up with the church of the first. The history of the early church, for which Christ had entered into human history, should now be continued. Once again within human history God must be seen to have a people. They challenged the history of the princes and magistrates in the light of the history of the biblical people of God. To them the Bible was not a textbook of merely human history, but of the divine in relationship with the human - a testimony of the way God and human beings have related to one another; a history which could now be continued in the same way. The aim of the church was not to compile dogma, confessions and lectionaries - it was to *live* and to *act*!

Wesleyanism shared this interest. While more appreciative of the notion of historical mutability (and therefore more historically aware), early Methodists strove to confront the history of their times with the ongoing history of God's people. Neither history nor theology was merely a science, a philosophy, an intellectual pursuit - it was day-to-day involvement and experience.

Although the nineteenth century revivalists and the Holiness movement perhaps seem easily to be dismissed as offering 'pie-in-the-sky bye-and-bye', a close study of their values will show that they shared the concern for engagement in history of their antecedents. Not only did many of them uphold west of the Atlantic much of the social reform emphasis of British Methodism, but they maintained a lifestyle which in itself had a gradual effect upon their milieu.

Pentecostals share this common history - a desire for engagement with and within history. Secular values and philosophies are to be *confronted* with an alternative paradigm, with a challenge to their assumptions. Pentecostals agree with Tertullian in particular that part of this challenge is in making visible the powerful presence of God through the operation of the charismata. For this reason the concerns and values of European protestant hermeneutics since

the Reformation may not always be considered relevant to the experience and thought-world of the pentecostal. The movement at grass-roots level[46] has not often been influenced by the positivist view of history; apart from where it has been influenced by fundamentalism[47] (e g the tele-evangelists and the North American rapprochement with evangelicalism since the second World War), it has felt no urgent need to disengage its Scriptures from the criticisms of such so-called 'scientific' history; and it does not share the despair of the post-modern generation that hope and meaning cannot be rationally established, since it does not share the rationalist and positivist presuppositions that led to that despair. It may not necessarily be unique in this sense; however, the formulation of a viable pentecostal hermeneutic will have to operate in full awareness of this situation.

It is tempting to subsume such a pentecostal attitude under the heading 'naive'. Many Anabaptists, Montanists, first-century Christians and twentieth century pentecostals have no doubt exhibited a naive and biblicistic understanding of Scripture. However, the immense interest today in the hermeneutical question among pentecostals shows that this is not true of the movement at every level.[48]

In concluding this chapter, it must be noted that the discontinuity between the antecedents and ethos of European protestantism and pentecostalism, while very real, is not absolute. Pentecostalism remains part of the twentieth century church world. There are few pentecostal teachers and theologians who are not aware of the tremendous challenge of interpreting today texts which were written almost two millennia ago. Although the movement may have inherited a significantly different ethos and approach to history than that of the formal theologians of Europe, it can still be appreciative of much of the work done in the hermeneutics of the non-pentecostal churches. The complexities and complications in interpreting millennia-old texts are not underestimated by the modern pentecostal scholar.[49] However, the challenge will not always be perceived to be on the plane of *historical criticism*. The problem may lie at another level, that of culture, of language, of gender, of some major aspects of a world-view. For the pentecostal it certainly does not lie on the level of *experience of God*. Where the modern and post-modern will sincerely doubt that resurrections take place, that blind people receive their sight, that demons possess human beings and can be exorcised - *this* is not the problem for the

pentecostal. For the pentecostal it is quite conceivable that God and demons work in this way, that they interact with humanity in observable ways - and hence that some more acceptable explanation of narrative which describes such phenomena need not be sought in interpreting the Scriptures more 'acceptably' to modern humanity. In effect, while the notion of 'myth' may be useful in understanding many contemporary and historical phenomena (e g Plüss 1993), it is not imperative to pentecostal understanding that the supernaturalism of Scripture be included under that heading.

This study will nevertheless not ignore the influence of hermeneutical philosophers and literary theorists. There is overwhelming agreement today that the reader of a text cannot be a neutral and detached observer, treating the text as a mere object of historical investigation. The subjective element in textual interpretation has been thoroughly considered, to the extent that it appears to have been almost absolutised in the deconstructionist approach. The challenge to a human product of the sceptical and technologically advanced twentieth century to 'merge historical horizons' with an Hellenistic Jew or Greek should not be underestimated. The relationship of 'words' to 'language'; the importance of the structure chosen by the author to convey priorities; the demands made upon an interpreter by different types of texts; the complex of relationships, values, life-experience and concerns which go to make up the individual reader / hearer; even the social context of both proclaimer and listener.... no attempt to establish a viable and credible pentecostal hermeneutic could be valid if it ignored these challenges and the work done in these areas by contemporary literary theorists. The work of Dilthey and his followers, who have attempted to free historical and textual research from the simplistic demand that it be conducted according to the methods and norms of the natural sciences, is valuable to our understanding of the major hermeneutical priorities. These issues are legitimate concerns, and should not be discounted because of differences in terms of historical philosophy between pentecostals and other church streams.

Yet the question the pentecostal movement faces is essentially this: In the light of who pentecostals are, where they come from, and what they experience - *do* they need to establish a distinctively pentecostal hermeneutic? Or *can* they viably make use of, as a primary guide to understanding themselves and the Scriptures, an interpretive approach already formulated

and maintained by some other religious or secular group or interest?

Two of the following chapters will be devoted to the two options available. In the next chapter a review and critique will be offered of some pentecostal attempts to utilise in more or less modified forms hermeneutical systems and methods developed mainly outside of, and with little reference to, pentecostal concerns. A later chapter will consider some elements which have already been identified by pentecostals as basic to a distinctive pentecostal hermeneutic, as well as some proposals of my own.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 2

1. This is Land's (1993:29ff) contention, similar to my own argument (Clark & Lederle 1989:19-21; 100-101).

2. Pentecostalism does not reveal the typical marks of gnosticism, as outlined later in this study with regard to the Faith Movement. However, those who stand outside the pentecostal-charismatic movement might be forgiven for understanding that the neo-gnosticism of the Faith Movement could not have gained the prominence it did were it not for the pentecostal-charismatic movement which has been its seeding ground.

3. And beyond the first-century churches: the *Didache* instructs concerning the attitude of the early second century church to apostles and prophets, the latter primarily in terms of their charismatic ministry (*Did* 11; 15). Robeck shows how Origen recognised charismatic phenomena at work in Christian communities during his own day (Robeck 1985b:114-115, 121). The first two or three centuries clearly knew a charismatic dimension in Christian worship and ministry (see also Robeck 1985c and 1987, both dealing with this subject.) Stander cites early Christian writers from the Apostolic Fathers to Eusebius who were acquainted with the working of the charismata in their own time (Stander 1985).

4. Anderson (1993:144) notes that the Holiness Movement was strongly influenced by African forms of worship, and that these have been incorporated into pentecostal liturgical expression: 'the shout, antiphonal singing, simultaneous and spontaneous prayer, dance and motor behaviour - all of which are not European but essentially African practices.' This is often overlooked in discussions of pentecostal roots.

5. Wesley's sense of humour, is well-illustrated by the mischievous tone of his entry of 17th May, 1742, in his journal: 'I... rode on till I overtook a serious man, with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were: therefore I said nothing to contradict them. But that did not content him: he was quite uneasy to know whether I held the doctrine of the decrees as he did; but I told him over and over, 'We had better keep to practical things, lest we should be angry at one another.' And so we did for two miles, till he caught me unawares, and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer; told me I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him, "No, I am John Wesley himself." Upon which he would gladly have run away outright. But being the better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side and endeavoured to show him his heart, till we came into the street of Northampton.'(Parker [s.a.] :96-97) This account demonstrates that Wesley's interests were not centred in dogma and confessional statements as much as in practical living.

6. Dayton intimates other links between Wesley and the 'radicals'. In 1987:40-42 he discusses the primitivistic motif in Wesley, the desire to return to the pre-Constantinian church of the first three centuries. In the same work (1987:43) he shows how Wesley realised his view of the Spirit and inspiration linked him to Quakerism. Estep, in his work on Anabaptist sources (1976:11), sees a real link between Anabaptism and Pietism, and ascribes the parentage of both Wesleyanism and pentecostalism to Pietism.

7. Moltmann's relationship with pentecostalism had been noted in the previous chapter. It is significant that he has grounded his earlier political theology on the example of Thomas Münzer. Moltmann can perhaps indicate to pentecostal scholarship just how contributory the radical reformation might be to pentecostal self-understanding. His own debate with the North Americans heirs of Anabaptism has not been without significant tensions (Moltmann 1983 and *Dialogue sequel* 1984), perhaps because Moltmann opts to identify with the more militant north German group. The neglect of Anabaptist studies among pentecostal scholars might be indicative of the strong North American influence in much pentecostal theologising, particularly since the impact of Methodism and the Holiness movement has been so overwhelming in the history and ethos of that continent. There may also be an aversion to Anabaptist studies on the part of pentecostals who have learned much of their church history from main-line protestant professors in non-pentecostal seminaries and universities. Littell remarks: 'The student of history or of church history in America has usually known very little about the Anabaptist movement..... Most historians who have written about the Reformation in the intervening four centuries have treated those they called "Anabaptists" in one of two ways: either dismissing them as peripheral, or basing their elaboration of the subject upon extremely hostile polemics. The Anabaptists have been the abandoned people, who passed in dim review behind the glittering personalities of the chief Reformers and their protecting princes.'(Littell 1964:138-139) Although this position may have changed in the intervening three decades (as Potter already indicates in his work on Zwingli (1976:168-169)), it still is remarkable that pentecostal scholarship has made so little of Anabaptist sources and values. The cumulative index of the first 15 years of *Pneuma* journal (in *Pneuma* 15 (1993)) shows that no single article deals specifically with Anabaptist themes or history. The first 9 issues of *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* reveal a similar lack of interest in this area of study.

8. Balke (1977:2-3) identifies seven different groups of *doperse radikalen*: Münzer and the Zwickau prophets; the Swiss brethren; refugees in Moravia under Hutter; Melchiorites; Munster baptists; Mennonites; and the followers of Joris at Delft. Pytches (1993:176-183) includes a chapter on the German prophets, in his overview of prophetic trends during 1900 years of church history, but makes no distinction between the Anabaptists of north Germany, and those of the south. His major discussion centres on Storch and Münzer.

9. Conrad Grebel writes to Thomas Münzer in 1524 as follows: 'One should also not protect the gospel and its adherents with the sword, nor themselves. We learn from our brother that this is also what you hold to.' (first letter, translated in Estep 1976:35). However, in the second letter he writes: 'The brother of Huiuff writes that you preached that the princes should be attacked with violence. Is that true? If you wish to defend war ... I admonish you by the common salvation of us all that you desist from all notions of your own both now and henceforth.' (Estep 1976:38).

10. Grebel appears to hint at such a gift in a letter to his brother-in-law, 1524: '... I am reading the Greek gospel of Matthew to some students, interpreting it according to my ability, but not prophesying... I will answer and show the knowledge of God. For I am full of sermons and the spirit of my belly constrains me. Behold, my belly is as new wine without a vent, which bursts the new wineskins. I shall speak and then I shall breathe a little more freely; I shall open my lips and answer' (translated in Estep 1976: 28-29). However, he could be referring merely to intense preaching.

11. Hans Denck, in his *Widerruf*, writes thus of Scripture: 'I hold the Sacred Scriptures above all human opinion but not so high as the Word of God which is living, powerful, and eternal, that is free and unfettered from all the elements of this world, as is God himself, who is a Spirit and no letter, written without pen and paper, that is impossible to judge. Also, salvation is not tied to the Scriptures, as useful

and good as they always might be. The reason is that it is not possible for the Scriptures to make an evil heart better, even if one knows them thoroughly. But a pious heart, namely, where there is a spark of true Godly zeal, will become better through all things. Consequently, the Holy Scriptures will work for good and salvation to believers but to unbelievers for damnation, as do all things.' (Translated in Estep 1976:133).

12. Potter (1976: 171) claims: 'Thirdly, and perhaps most dangerously of all, they were exclusive politically as well as religiously.' Some of the most peace-loving Christians in the history of the discipleship of Jesus Christ met a cruel death for this reason, as had the martyrs of the early church, and as have many pentecostals in politically volatile regions during the twentieth century. Land (1993:22) quotes Barrett (1988:819) with regard to pentecostals: They are 'more harassed, persecuted, suffering, martyred than perhaps any other Christian tradition in recent history'. He continues: 'They are often scorned, imprisoned, tortured and killed by totalitarian dictators or those revolutionaries who oppose such regimes.' In an anthropological study on pentecostalism in the Caribbean and Central America, Manning asks: 'Why does pentecostalism come in for so much condemnation from those who most strongly identify themselves as the enemies of colonialism, notably the new national elites and the newly radicalised clergy of the mainstream churches? ... To the new national bourgeoisie, Pentecostalism is a threat. It is the religion of the masses, and more than that, the source and symbol of their self-dignity and sense of human equality. The new elite view Pentecostalism... as a challenge to authority... the elite reaction is to stigmatise Pentecostalism by associating it withe United States or other allegedly imperialist countries.' (Manning 1980:181-182)

13. Grebel, with regard to liturgical singing, echoes Tertullian's principle that if Scripture does not directly command a thing, it should not be done: '... that which is not taught by clear instruction and example we shall regard as forbidden to us - just as if it stood written, Do not do this; do not sing' (translated in Estep 1976:33, Grebel's first letter to Münzer, 1524.)

14. cf Treiyer 1974:135-150 on the Montanist Tertullian's use of Scripture, also Robeck 1987:79-81 and O'Malley 1967. Tertullian's stern emphasis on a separate lifestyle is clearly seen in his *De Spectaculis* and *De Cultu Feminarum* from his catholic period, and the harsher *De Corona* and *De Fuga in Persecutione* from his Montanist years; Davis 1977:38-39 and Robeck 1987:70,79-80 provide detail on his position with regard to the charismata. His position on lifestyle was clearly reinforced by the content of the New Prophecy of the Montanists. Tertullian's arguments in *De Corona* are interesting: He implies that his own stern morality and separation from every vestige of paganism are based upon the revelation of the Holy Spirit. However, this point of view is also backed by Scripture and the Christian tradition of his contemporaries: 'It was then that the gossips started: maybe they were not all Christians, but they certainly talked very much like pagans! "Why does he have to make so much trouble for the rest of us Christians over the trifling matter of dress?....." Yes, I should not be surprised if such people were not figuring out how they could abolish martyrdom in the same way as they rejected the prophecies of the Holy Spirit... Seeing that they also produce the following objection: "But where [in the Gospel] are we forbidden to wear a crown?" - I will, at this time, rather turn my attention to this point, as more appropriate to be dealt with here, since it is, in fact, the essence of the present contention.' (Tert *Cor* 4, 5, 6.) His arguments then clearly show that he feels that the revelations taking place through the Holy Spirit as manifested by the prophetesses were not contrary to or supplementary to the understanding of the Gospel in his day, as derived from tradition (*regula fidei*) based upon Scripture. Robeck (1985d:270-280) shows how Tertullian considered prophecy to be ongoing revelation and yet not supplementary to Scripture and the *regula fidei*.

15. This is a common tendency among pentecostals in South Africa too: Möller appears to have highlighted tongues as *the* distinctive of the pentecostal movement, as the evidence of the baptism in the Spirit. In *Ons Pinkstererfenis* (Möller 1955) he devotes almost the entire work to this phenomenon. In *Diskussie oor die Charismata* (Möller 1975) he devotes over 100 pages of the work to a discussion of tongues. (However, a large portion of that section (pp 151-191) is a unique contribution from a qualified psychologist, who is also a theologian, on psychological and linguistic evaluations of glossolalia.) Bond (1989:134) also chooses the baptism in the Spirit with tongues as the distinguishing mark of

pentecostalism, although his extended discussion goes further than this. Hattingh (1989) makes no mention of tongues, choosing to deal with the notion of experience, as does du Plessis (1989). Gause (1976:113), an American, objects to tongues as being seen as the distinctive mark of pentecostalism, claiming that common experience, even of such a phenomenon as tongues, should not be used to attempt either unity or identification by pentecostals. I consciously attempted in Clark & Lederle 1989 to avoid concentrating on tongues as a pentecostal distinctive, because of the emotional content of any discussion concerning that phenomenon, and also because focusing on tongues severely limits the scope of the discussion. Hocken (1997:98) points out that there are also limitations implicit in discussing pentecostal emphasis on *experience* as its prime distinctive, since in reality it is pentecostal *practice* that is distinctive, and practice implies far more than mere experience.

16. Bruner (1970:36) sees a number of congruences between Montanist piety and pentecostal. These are shared with the Anabaptists. They are: belief that the end of the ages had come (the last period has commenced), the 'latter rain' of the Spirit'; orthodox doctrine, the offence of which lies in 'crudity of statement' rather than in content; ardent expectation of Christ's return; and 'a strict morality prevails'.

17. Kraus considers the 'evangelical coalition' a promising sign, although he notes that there are significant divergences between the distinguishing characteristics of the Holiness-pentecostal movement and the evangelical-fundamentalist groups (Kraus 1979b:58-59). These divergences become relevant later in this study, and will be dealt with there. This North American shift had its impact in South African pentecostal groups, among others: whereas women were ordained in the early years of the Apostolic Faith Mission, this practice was avoided (although not overtly rejected) from the late 1940's until very recently. In response to Clark 1995a (presented to the Committee for Doctrine, Ethics and Liturgy), in 1997 the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA decided that no restrictions are to be placed upon the ministry, ordination, call or placement of women within the movement.

18. Ferguson (1984) shows that Wesley used the Scriptures with a different nuance to the classical Reformers. While he shared their conviction that it was divinely inspired and the norm for doctrine and practice, he also emphasised the Bible as a guide to *holiness*, a holiness founded upon experience of God. Mullen (1978) considers the Wesleyan hermeneutic as revealed in John Wesley's sermons to be simplistically uncritical (apparently associating him with the fundamentalist approach), while recognising that his preaching was nevertheless 'quite successful'.

19. Thus Bruner (1970:38): 'It appears that the majority Pentecostalism absorbed from its Methodist parentage the convictions of the subsequent and instantaneous experience and transferred them bodily from Wesley's sanctification to their baptism in the Holy Spirit'. The major thrust of Dayton 1987 is that the debt of pentecostalism to Methodism is much greater than that, and comprehends the entire pentecostal spectrum as enunciated in the 'four-square' statement: Jesus Christ: Saviour, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and Coming King.

20. I covered the theme and its sources widely in Clark & Lederle 1989. Since the preparation of that work in 1987, a number of contributions have been published, including Dayton 1987, Land 1993 and Faupel 1996 (based on a 1989 thesis). Significant non-pentecostal contributions to the field have included Mills 1976, Dayton 1987, Anderson 1979, Bruner 1970, Culpepper 1977, Hart 1978, and Williams 1972 and 1980.

21. Du Plessis (1977-183-184) uses the metaphor of the steak and the glowing coals to describe the difference between pentecostal appropriation of orthodox elements of Christianity and that of the historical churches; McDonnell (1973:51) notes the disparity between the spoken and the written aspects of pentecostal communications. My own conclusion in Clark & Lederle (1989:99) reads: 'In the course of this study we have attempted an evaluation of Pentecostal practice and thought from a variety of perspectives.... Yet it must at this point be unequivocally stated that the study has not been able to comprehend or communicate Pentecost adequately, for the simple reason that a one-dimensional approach has been used (of necessity).' This one-dimensional approach is the 'rational-literary'. As far as obtaining a consensus among pentecostal scholars with regard to the true distinctives of the movement, Hocken's

comment (1976:34-35) is noted: that pentecostals evaluate theological propositions and personal testimonies on the basis first of experiential commonality, then by *discernment*, and only after that in terms of doctrinal content. If this is true, it would explain why works such as Land (1993) and Dayton (1987) *feel* right to many pentecostals, and others do not. The subjectivism of this approach is, of course, not without peril for consistent scholarship.

22. Broadened to five elements by adding 'Sanctifier' to the list, as noted in the theme for the Society for Pentecostal Studies' annual conference at Oakland, CA., 1997.

23. Goff (1988) shows how the influence of leaders such as Parham influenced the pentecostal movement in the direction of mission. The initial understanding of glossolalia was that it was equipment to preach in foreign languages. Since that never materialised, the unde...anding was later adapted, but the missionary emphasis remained: 'Convinced that time was short an.. hat the mission fields of the world were now ripened for an endtime harvest of souls, Pentecostal evangelists and missionaries forged on in spite of limited funds and rough-hewn talents. Their message, buoyed by demonstrable displays of spiritual power, found converts.' (:164)

24. Land's point of departure and basic acceptance of the uniqueness of pentecostalism parallels expressions from South Africans such as myself (Clark & Lederle 1989), Cronjè (1981) and Hattingh (1984 & 1989). He argues that pentecostalism is not merely fundamentalist Christianity with an added doctrine of Spirit baptism and gifts - neither is it merely an experience which can be adapted to just any belief system (Land 1993:29). He sketches the areas in which it exists in continuity and discontinuity with various other Christian polarities: Arminian versus Calvinist, Eastern versus Western, Catholic versus protestant, etc. He endeavours more than many North American pentecostals (Sheppard is one notable exception) to abandon the reductionism of pentecostalism to a North American sect or stream. Hunter's concern that discussion and contributions on the pentecostal Website he is managing be representative of global pentecostalism is also a hopeful sign, and the input from Asia evident in Ma & Menzies (1997) has given concrete expression to the need for a wider basis of contribution.

25. Poloma (1989:5) notes: 'Pentecostalism, as well as the larger charismatic movement, may be said to represent a case in which Weberian "affective action" replaces "rational action" in constructing a world-view. Rather than in concentrating on the use of the most effective means to achieve a desired goal, more attention is given to "affectional sentiments" in pursuing "absolute ends". Affective action thus flows more or less from sentiment and is viewed as a less rational form of conduct than rational action. Although Max Weber's types of action are "ideal types" which are not found in their pure form, they can be employed as heuristic devices for discussing differences found in social action.'

26. Although Land expresses a desire to 'offer an analysis, integration, and re-vision of Pentecostal spirituality in a manner not attempted until now' (Land 1993:27), and does present an extremely coherent argument for an understanding of their essentiality and role that deserves the title 'theological', he nevertheless faces the challenges and achieves the ambiguity that have confronted many attempts by others: how to express in the one-dimensional world of the written word the passion, dynamism, urgency, overwhelming love and gratitude that are part of the pentecostal heritage, without in some way cheapening it. The very basis of the affections lies in experience (encounter with God in the baptising Christ), and their continuation is linked to commitment (total surrender). Land has probably achieved an 'understanding' of these realities that would be appreciated by his co-pentecostals, yet has not escaped the feeling of inadequacy prompted by all such attempts. The virtual impossibility of the task means that in a sense perhaps only the 'converted' may be able to make 'sense' of the work, in the same way that the work of Cronjè (1981) has been little grasped by non-pentecostals in South Africa, and that the conclusion of Clark & Lederle (1989) has been termed 'mystical' by some. Cox (1994:6), reviewing Land, comments: 'And once again, as Gadamer and Whitehead warn, "experience" is proving to be a slippery customer to handle. Land has actually marched into a field that is strewn with mines, and sometimes I wondered if he knows how perilous the turf really is.' And '... because Land does not relate his argument to this larger discussion (Cox mentions Barth, Moltmann and Tillich), I was not always sure which pathway through the minefield he was negotiating.' (:8)

27. Anderson is of European descent, was brought up in erstwhile Rhodesia, and now lives in South Africa. He is a member of a church in a black township near Pretoria. He has been a pentecostal believer since 1968 (his teens), and states ' my love for and commitment to Africa, its peoples and their cultural heritage, and my identification with their struggle for liberation are all reasons for considering myself an African' (1991:1). His conversion and discipling was in the United Apostolic Faith Church, which is one of the many astonishing contradictions of Africa: a church which teaches British-Israelitism (of the Armstrong version), which is the sole 'white' pentecostal church to have survived the transition to black rule in Zimbabwe as a still largely 'white and/or Western' group, and whose members are traditionally far less racialist than the average white African. It is also a group which has produced in practical ministry numerous equivalents to Anderson, perhaps because their basic commitment to radical discipleship is more formative in their personal piety than are their formal doctrinal expressions.

28. Daneel (1971, 1974 & 1978 are examples) has specialised in the African independent churches (currently more correctly referred to as the African *initiated* churches) among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. Oosthuizen (e g 1992) has taken more interest in the AIC's in the process of urbanisation in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal province. Sundkler (1961 & 1976) provided some of the best-known earlier academic material to emerge in this area, specialising in prophetic movements in Zululand and Swaziland.

29. It might seem strange that a pentecostal study such as this should build more upon commonalities between the southern (or quietist) Anabaptists and twentieth century pentecostalism, than upon those between more 'charismatic' northern groups and itself. There are a number of reasons for this choice: The rejection by the southerners of northern militancy is similar to the early pentecostal option for pacifism and quietism; recognition that the notion of prophecy and spirit-guidance common to the north was of the sectarian type encountered mainly on the fringes of pentecostalism (e g in South Africa in the *Späde Reën* groups gathered around individual prophets); lack of a developed pneumatology in the north that could compare with the comprehensive notion of discipleship developed in the south. If Anabaptist studies ever receive greater prominence in pentecostalism, this is perhaps an area which could be more significantly researched. At present most of the material being published on Anabaptism concentrates on the south, and it is these martyred groups who most directly influenced the line from which pentecostalism has arisen: Wesleyanism and the Holiness movement.

30. Volf (1997:233) summarises his description of the crucial role and expression of Christian difference as follows: '*... Christian difference is always a complex and flexible network of small and large refusals, divergences, subversions, and more or less radical alternative proposals, surrounded by the acceptance of many cultural givens. There is no single correct way to relate to a given culture as a whole, or even to its dominant thrust; there are only numerous ways of accepting, transforming, or replacing various aspects of a given culture from within.*' (Volf's italics). He declares that accommodation can not be a valid Christian response to consensus cultural mores, saying: 'We need to retrieve the stress on difference. *It is the difference that matters*. Erase the difference and literally nothing will remain that *could* matter... Our task should not be accommodation, but distance from a given culture - a critical distance, to be sure, not a naive distance unaware of its own captivity to what it thinks it has escaped; a productive distance, not a sterile self-insulating distance of those who let the world go to hell.' (:234) (Volf's italics). Poloma (1989:3ff) notes that while pentecostalism presents itself as a protest against modernity (therefore a radical alternative community), it does so by a synthesis of rationality and a sacred world-view, in which the spiritual is experienced in the midst of the profane.

31. It would appear that it is the radical alternative offered by the five communities highlighted by Hollenweger in *Pentecost between Black and White* (1974) that forms the rationale for the work. Hollenweger refers to them as 'revolutionary' (:9-11), although he would probably disagree with my own position when he says: '... it would be ... unjust to declare Pentecostal spirituality to be the root-cause for the a-political position of many Pentecostals.'(:11) Depending on how one defines 'a-political', it could be contended that the a-political position is more radical than many of the political options offered in the twentieth century political spectrum (as discussed in depth in Clark & Lederle 1989:87-89). This is particularly true if these political or ideological options succumb to a tendency to reduce the dynamics

of complex societal structures to simplistically understood tensions between classes of people, e g the oppressed and their oppressors.

32. Pentecostalism is obviously not the only stream in Christianity that values encounter with God in terms of spiritual experience. It was precisely the challenge to enunciate clearly the distinctiveness of the pentecostal notion of such an encounter that led to the attempts in Clark & Lederle 1989:43-65. At this stage I described the experience of encounter that could be termed 'pentecostal' as evangelical, charismatic, leading to intensified commitment to the person and mission of Jesus Christ, and to a lifestyle pleasing to him. I included a discussion on the role of emotion in such encounter, as well as a very tentative discussion on the 'norms' of pentecostalism as opposed to those of Catholicism and Protestantism. A decade later I would prefer to include other notions such as perceptibility and testability in that description. It needs to be noted that pentecostalism (the classical pentecostal denominations) do not consider this encounter peculiar to themselves, particularly not since the rise of the neo-pentecostal/charismatic movement of the 1960's and later. It has been shared by prominent non-pentecostals such as Michael Harper and Dennis Bennet, and its impact expressed in terms that sound eminently 'pentecostal' by charismatic scholars such as McKay (1994).

33. This is admittedly today an ideal. It was an early pentecostal ideal which did not long survive racial, cultural and economic tensions, at least not broadly. However, unless one is totally given to cynicism or socio-political reductionism, most observers can still perceive this modality in pentecostal converts. My personal observation is that in my many cross-cultural sorties (Black African, Indian, Chinese, Creole, Afrikaans, North American, German, Scandinavian) I have been accepted by pentecostals of numerous national, cultural and social backgrounds as a pentecostal brother first, and scarcely ever as just a white middle-class South African. The exceptions have occurred where strong ideological conditioning has been promoted among certain groups, eg. nationalism among many white Afrikaners, marxism among many radicalised South African clergy, prejudice against white South Africans in extra-African intellectual circles, etc. However, these exceptions have been minor compared to the large-scale acceptance usually accorded an unknown but welcomed brother.

34. It could be argued that Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, was much more radical and revolutionary than that of the other radicals of his time, the Zealots. Non-biblical radicalism aims at confronting hated institutions and deprivation with hostility, violence and resistance. The radicalism of turning the other cheek and walking the second mile is far more in line with the notion *radix* or 'root'. It is far more radical, and an expression of greater freedom, to pay a tax to Caesar on the basis that he is not God, than to resist or to boycott taxes. When a theologian such as Moltmann pleads for radical Christianity, it is frankly disappointing that he allies himself with currently fashionable notions of 'radicalism' such as Münzer's uprising and the student revolts of the 1960's and guerilla violence in erstwhile Rhodesia. It is also disappointing when the 'critical freedom' of the gospel is wielded solely from the perspective of one 'valid' ideology, that of the Left. The radicalism of pentecost is of an older and deeper tradition than that. These criticisms have been presented, and these notion discussed in detail elsewhere (Clark & Lederle 1989:90-96; Clark 1990:217-220).

35. Walker (1970:444-445) notes: '... scholastic Lutherianism... though based on the Scriptures, it assumed the form of a fixed dogmatic interpretation, rigid, exact, and demanding intellectual conformity. Emphasis was laid on pure doctrine and the sacraments, as constituting the sufficient elements of the Christian life. For that vital relationship between the believer and God which Luther had taught had been substituted very largely a faith which consisted in the acceptance of a dogmatic whole. The layman's role was largely passive: to accept the dogmas which he was assured were pure, to listen to their exposition from the pulpit, to partake of the sacraments and share in the ordinances of the church - these were the practical sum of the Christian life. Some evidences of deeper piety existed, of which the hymns of the age are ample proof, and doubtless many individual examples of real and inward religious life were to be found, but the general tendency was external and dogmatic. It was the tendency often, although only partially justly, called "dead orthodoxy". This Protestant scholasticism was in some respects narrower than that of the mediaeval period, for it had unwittingly been influenced by the spirit of rationalism against which it struggled... Pietism was a breach with these scholastic tendencies, an assertion of the

primacy of feeling in Christian experience, a vindication for the laity of an active share in the upbuilding of the Christian life, and a stress upon a strict ascetic attitude toward the world.'

36. 'Neither Spener nor ... Francke ... was a Separatist. But they attempted to inject into German Christianity concepts associated with the Free Church movement, while disturbing neither the state-church structures nor the traditional doctrinal formulations of Lutheranism. The strategy of penetration which the Pietists followed was only partially successful. However, Pietism did become one of the most productive movements in Lutheran life, reaching far beyond Germany and the seventeenth century and bringing life into numerous new enterprises - missionary, benevolent, and denominational.' (Estep 1976:11)

37. How true this has been in the thinking of the 'modern' people is made evident in the work of popular science-fiction author Isaac Asimov. In his *Foundation* trilogy (Asimov 1951, 1952, 1953) in particular he posits the notion of *psycho-history*. According to this prospective science, the future history of mankind could be plotted according to a mathematical formula, if only sufficient data of the right type were available. Asimov did not feel this could be done now - this planet does not contain a large enough sample of humanity from which the formulae can be developed, nor upon which it can be tested. A galactic empire containing hundreds of thousands of human-inhabited planets would be necessary. Asimov exhibits an ultimate psychological and social reductionism in dealing with the human psyche and human society - and has probably been the best selling science-fiction author of the century. (While scarcely theological, this sort of information and insight from the secular society and the contemporary culture in which theologians live can prevent theology from becoming a specialist science for the churches. It is the fact that they are well-read and -informed citizens of their age that makes thinkers such as Francis Schaeffer relevant commentators on current realities; these are qualities that have surfaced among pentecostal leaders from time to time, notably in Donald Gee and David du Plessis.)

38. This was specifically articulated in the 3rd and 4th propositions stated in his second edition of *The Christian Faith*, published in 1831.

39. Schaeffer argues that the post-historically-critical period in theology ushered in by Barth is equivalent to the non-rational leap taken in contemporary post-modernism: 'He (Barth) held .... the higher critical theories, so the Bible contains mistakes, but we are to believe it anyway. 'Religious truth' is separated from the historical truth of the Scriptures. Thus there is no place for reason and there is no point of verification. ... As far as the system is concerned, the use of religious or secular terms makes no difference to it ..... Faith, whether expressed in secular or religious terms, becomes a leap without any verification because it is totally separated from the logical and the reasonable.' (Schaeffer 1968:50-52). Van Til argues that Barth, in attempting to avoid the trap of 'consciousness theology' so derided by Feuerbach, derives a notion of the Bible as Word of God that rejects the positions of Rome, of orthodox Protestantism, and of mysticism as well as neo-Protestantism. In so doing he rejects both the notion of plenary inspiration as well the notion of revelation in history and the general trustworthiness of Scripture (Van Til 1973: 137-141). Clark (1963:185ff) argues that Barth both asserts and denies the authority, accuracy and veracity of the Bible, essentially the same position as Schaeffer above. Deist (1979:54), comparing Barth and Bultmann, declares 'Barth, on the other hand, was hardly concerned with history at all... Barth's position was one of a consistent theological a priori; Bultmann's was a result of a consistent anthropological a priori.' The implication is that, according to Barth, an interest in history can detract from a focus on God.

40. Schaeffer has depicted the major post-modern concern as escape from the implications of that rationalistic use of human reason which has defined human beings as purely biological products of an impersonal and non-rational universe (Schaeffer 1968). If this is so, then the approach to Scripture in a post-modern age would entail a lessening of concern for the *rational content* of the Bible (including the historical questions it raises) and a concentration upon the *effect* of the Scriptures in a given situation. This is certainly true in the hermeneutics of the political and liberation theologies, as I shall also attempt to demonstrate in the

next chapter. The post-modern approach in hermeneutical philosophy is at the same time a post-(historically)-critical approach. For this reason one finds it difficult to identify an historical debate within Christian theology since the 1980's, that is not pursued solely by conservatives and fundamentalists. In the post-modern paradigm it appears that the question of history and historicity of the Biblical narratives is no longer a major issue.

41. Lederle (1994:25) asserts that the charismatic renewal 'exhibits more of the characteristics of post-modernism than of modernism', qualifying this by seeing it as an *anti*-modern rather than *ultra*-modern form of post-modernism (:26). However, both are critiques of rationalism, if not of rationality.

42. In this regard Schaeffer makes a useful distinction between *rationality* and *rationalism* (1968:35). However, it is easy to fall into pitfalls of terminology, e g Lederle describes the post-modernism of the charismatic movement as an attempt to 'expand reason' to include the 'nonrational and spiritual dimensions of human personality' (Lederle 1994:25). The non-rational will surely never be included within the realm of 'reason'. Perhaps another term is needed, since Lederle obviously intends phenomena other than those acceptable to rationalism and positivism to be included within the scope of reason's investigation. Lederle is following Kelsey (1974) in this respect. Griffin (1993b:2) notes how post-modern thinkers accuse one another of being 'modern', according to what each groups considers most objectionable in modern philosophy, and therefore does or does not reject or react against.

43. Most of the destructive 'findings' of the higher criticism concerning the historicity of the biblical narratives have been based upon *internal* evidence, i e literary theory working from within Scripture itself. However, the influx of archaeological information during the last 150 years has made the evaluation of the biblical data more empirical, in that now *external* testimony can contribute to the understanding of biblical narrative (Albright 1938:181; Albright 1949:224,226; Grollenburg 1956:35). This has not always been welcomed by many literary theorists, some of whom seem reluctant to approach the hypotheses of the nineteenth century critical scholars critically. Deist, for instance, is prepared to argue that the Old Testament narratives are not *history* as we have come to understand it since the Enlightenment; rather that they are the product of writers who have a 'legendary' picture of reality; and that evaluating their witness in the light of archaeological evidence, among other external data, is to subject it to 'unfair and illegitimate criticism and to an unfair and illegitimate test of credibility' (Deist 1978:9). Old Testament scholars such as G E Wright and New Testament scholars such as O Cullmann and C H Dodd have disagreed with this principle (Richardson 1961:128-139). The Scriptures are to them a record of a particular *history*, a history of God and his relationship to humanity. This history (*Heilsgeschichte*) took place within the context of a secular history, and must thus be taken seriously (Dodd 1960; see also Kasper 1980:159-166). Although the testimony of Scripture cannot be reduced to historiography as practised in the modern era, it must be allowed to speak for itself in relationship to secular history. G E Wright points out that the religion of the Old Testament was indeed an *historical* religion, as opposed to the cyclic nature religions of the surrounding nations (Wright 1962:17-18. Moltmann 1967:95ff contrasts the eschatologically 'historical' religion of Israel with what he terms the 'epiphany' religion of Canaan). The New Testament must thus also be interpreted in this light. The Bible should not be seen as a source book of certain immutable truths, but essentially a record of divine activity *within* human history (Wright 1958). Cullmann extends this idea to Christology: 'Christology is the doctrine of an "event", not the doctrine of natures' (Cullmann 1963:9). This approach to the Scriptures is an antithesis to the scepticism of the nineteenth century which was based upon the positivist view of history and the asupernaturalistic presuppositions of humanistic rationalism. However, neither it nor archaeology should be seen as an attempt to 'prove' the biblical record, but as an attempt to take it seriously, as history in terms of the twentieth century historical *science* and not the eighteenth and nineteenth century *philosophy* (McDowell 1975:20-22). The advent and influence of post-modernism both within and without the church has led to a sense that the questions of *history* are no longer the relevant questions to ask, since they can never be answered in an absolute sense, and that in the study of texts it is the world of the *text* that has become central and not the world of history (cf Cargal 1993:185 on the issue of Pilate's handwashing). In the next chapter it is argued that post-modernism has not rejected the findings of the positivistic approach to history, but is a logical successor to them.

Therefore a post-modern approach to texts may be leaving vital historical assumptions unanswered. The major challenges to the positivist approach continue to be found in the evangelical theological camp, where internally it surfaces primarily in terms of the 'inerrancy' issue (e g the discussions recorded in Nicole & Ramsey Michaels 1980, Radmacher & Preuss 1984, and Conn 1988) and externally and more aggressively in the assertion of the absolutes of Scripture and importance of rationality (e g Guinness 1994, McDowell & Hostetler 1994).

44. Hollenweger (1977:291-307) makes this explicit - pentecostals are fundamentalists. Barr (1977:208) is hesitant to maintain this. More recent pentecostal objections to this categorisation will be mentioned in the next chapter.

45. They may not have always have seen their socio-political role as that of *activism*, but more from the perspective of *obedience*. This has led to activism of a sort at times, e g the Anabaptist refusal to take the oath or to baptise their children (both of radical political significance in their day), and the activities of Wilberforce and the so-called Clapham Sect to change the morality of England at political level. Therefore if not always the dynamite, definitely always the salt.

46. As mentioned in the introductory chapter of this study, it is not always simple to evaluate the interaction of grass-roots members and trained theologians in pentecostalism. In this summary I am attempting to describe the state of affairs among wider pentecostal membership, particularly as I have encountered it. My own experience of pentecostal grass-roots members in their daily lives is limited to Africa and Europe, while I have made numerous contacts with Asia and Latin America. I have little input from day-to-day pentecostalism in North America, and have had to rely primarily on scholarly sources such as Hollenweger (1977) and Poloma (1989).

47. Discussed in detail in the next chapter, the tensions and similarities between fundamentalism and pentecostalism.

48. Remarkably (in South Africa at least) it is often the challenge of the literalist, simplistic and fundamentalist biblicism of many of the new charismatics (the Kenyon-Hagin-Copeland axis) which has driven many pentecostal scholars to the question, rather than the derision of the more 'historically sophisticated' theologians. My own first (rather short) work of real theological research (not mentioned in my introduction) was an evaluation of the teaching of the Rhema Bible Church in South Africa (Clark 1983), completed as part of the requirements for final year Divinity. Within the AFM of SA the issues of biblical authority and inerrancy have rarely been touched upon, whereas the simplistic approach of the new charismatics who base their exegesis on the thinking of E W Kenyon often elicits heated debate in both formal and informal discussions. Horn (1989) is another AFM of SA pastor who produced an academic work on this movement.

49. Therefore many pentecostal scholars would agree with Ervin (1985:29) that 'linguistic, literary and historical analysis are indispensable as a first step to the understanding of Scriptures.' And with Menzies (1985:10) that at the first level of interpretation (what he calls the *inductional* level) one analyses the text employing the skills and tools of scientific interpretation.

CHAPTER 3

A CRITIQUE OF SOME HERMENEUTICAL MODELS ADOPTED BY PENTECOSTALS

The relationship between the pentecostal movement and the other Christian denominations has not always been harmonious. However, there has generally been a desire on the part of pentecostals to be part of the Christian world, and not to see the working of the gifts of the Spirit as something sectarian or cultic, merely a distinctive mark of the pentecostals which is not intended for all other Christians. Although the neo-pentecostal phenomenon of the 1960's and later has to a large extent vindicated this view, the pentecostal church still belongs to a group whose antecedents have found themselves existing separate from the 'orthodox' Christian community. That this was not their own desire (as in the Wesleyan revival and later separation from the Anglican church, and the Anabaptist appeal to the Reformers to guide the whole protestant movement along the radical Biblical path) does not negate the fact that pentecostal distinctives do exist, and have to be taken into consideration.[1]

Since the Pentecostal movement did not commence on the basis of a formulated confession distinct from other groups in Christianity, its earlier teachers and scholars have often presented their arguments in the mould of non-pentecostal theologies. Most often these categories have been 'borrowed' from the groups closest to them or most vehemently opposed to them, in their own national situation (as mentioned above). This is particularly true of use of the Scriptures; for instance Walter Hollenweger, in his dedication to *The Pentecostals*, makes his own debt to non-pentecostal theology explicit.[2] With the growth of interest in pentecostalism as a distinctive way of thinking and of using the Scriptures, this tendency is not left unquestioned by many pentecostal scholars. One of the most lively debates to emerge among them since the interest in pentecostal distinctives in the 1980's, has been the question of pentecostal hermeneutics. This is basic to the quest for self-understanding taking place in the movement.

This chapter concentrates on pentecostals who have consciously used, or proposed the use of, an approach to the Scriptures which has been formulated outside of the pentecostal movement.

They may have expressed satisfaction that the model they have chosen is entirely adequate for their use as pentecostal theologians; or they may have modified a non-pentecostal scheme until they are satisfied that they can use it without denying their own pentecostal heritage. The apparent reasons for adopting such a position as theirs are numerous.[3] Those pentecostals who have chosen to 'borrow' from non-pentecostal theological categories and methods continually challenge pentecostal scholarship as it attempts to define itself. The most obvious source of much borrowing has been that group which is apparently most akin to pentecostals in values and mission: the evangelicals. This group then forms the first category in this evaluation.

3.1 Conservative evangelicalism

This group has influenced pentecostalism to its greatest extent in North America more than elsewhere. On that continent one finds a unique situation, where evangelicals strongly outnumber pentecostals. The social, political and theological impact of evangelicalism is thus so much greater than in most other parts of the world, and the emergent pentecostal movement has largely had to operate in the shadow of a Christian ideology with which it seems to share many common concerns. There are both pentecostals and evangelicals who would like to see pentecostal theology, and hermeneutics in particular, develop consciously under the umbrella of evangelicalism (Fee 1976 [4]; Johnston 1984). It is also noticeable how many North American pentecostal theologians refer to themselves as 'evangelicals'.

The tenor of pentecostal theology in Europe, Africa, Asia and (to some extent) Latin America is often significantly different to that of North America because *historically* the movement there has not been as strongly influenced by conservative evangelical concerns. In South Africa the local evangelical groups have had a negligible effect and influence upon the development of pentecostal thought and practice.[5] However, at grass-roots and pulpit level the pentecostal movement *has* been influenced even outside of North America. This is mainly because of the high visibility of American evangelical and pentecostal tele-personalities (including entertainers), and the copious literature produced at every intellectual level by the evangelical establishment. The primary influence upon pentecostals of the largely populist output has been

in promoting the theological methods and concerns of *fundamentalism* and *dispensationalism*.

The pentecostal movement stands in the tradition of those groups who maintain that the record of Scripture is historically accurate, particularly in terms of the so-called supernatural stories e g the Noachian Flood, the ten plagues on Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the virgin birth of Jesus, the resurrection, etc. These were termed the Christian *fundamentals* by those Christians who rejected the findings of higher criticism[6], and in time all Christians who maintained such a stance in this century have come to be labelled 'fundamentalists'.[7]

However, the technical definition of fundamentalism among pentecostal and evangelical scholars today may probably be subsumed under three headings:

i) a belief in the *verbal* inspiration of Scripture;

ii) a commitment to the literal *inerrancy* of the scriptural record, and

iii) promotion and affirmation of the tenets of the great Christian *confessions* of the immediate post-Reformation era.

These values are often maintained in a distinctive way, combining a literalistic and uncritical biblicism with an unyielding commitment to the fundamental doctrines. While the term 'fundamentalism' is not always acceptable in evangelical circles today, there is still much of its spirit evident in the insistence of many so-called neo-evangelicals. This is particularly true where the fundamentalist ethos is allied with or influenced by *dispensationalism*.

The fundamentalist attitude in pentecostalism has been evident primarily since the last World War. It has been particularly obvious in the preaching of the better-known evangelists - the confident and assertive style of the evangelist lending itself well to the nature of fundamentalism. It may be that this *style* has been adopted by analogy with the more frenetic evangelical preachers; or, as Spittler appears to intimate, it may be as a result of the conciliation between evangelicals and pentecostals in North America during the last 5 decades (Spittler 1985:59-60). Spittler himself identifies with the notions of verbal inspiration and inerrancy, although he intimates that were he to formulate his own approach to Scripture, it

would encompass far more than these concerns.[8] He also shows that the terminology of fundamentalism has been included in the Assemblies of God *Statement of Fundamental Truths* with regard to inspiration of Scripture (Spittler 1985:60).[9]

Fundamentalism may also be understood in a wider sense, e g in the way the term is used in the Western media of Muslim fundamentalists. In this sense it is very evident in the American Churchly Right, those evangelical Christians who identify true Christianity with the essential concerns of the American Right - capitalism, patriotism (nationalism), anti-communism, pro-life, etc. Many pentecostals identify themselves uncritically with this way of thinking, without considering the implications of such an identification for radical discipleship and for fellowship in a pluralistic movement.[10]

While pentecostals could identify with the fundamentalist concern that the record and values of Scripture be taken seriously, for many it is difficult to maintain the virtual deification of the letter of Scripture itself.[11] The issue of *verbal* inspiration is a particular problem, since pentecostals do not experience the revelation of God via the charismata in such a mechanical way.[12] At the same time, pentecostals *do* find it necessary to reinforce the concept of the sole *authority* of Scripture: 'If we lose our hold on the Bible, that infallible rule of our faith, and conduct, we are lost' (McLean 1984:36). However, the issue for them is not the *perfection* of Scripture, but the perfection of the *God* of Scripture. Scripture thus fulfils the role of a *reliable and adequate witness* to the God who gave it, while at the same time it is formed in the mould of the persons and era which produced it. This non-fundamentalistic view was the strong and influential contention of the late Principal of the AFM Theological College in Johannesburg, Frank Cronjè (Cronjè 1981:32-38). If, like the Anabaptists (Kraus 1979a:173), pentecostalism is a 'Jesus-centred movement' then its loyalty should be more to the object of witness (Jesus Christ) than to the bearer of the witness (Scripture). In dialogue with evangelical scholars in South Africa, I made the following points:

> (The pentecostal approach to Scripture) ... attempts to start with the God who reveals himself in Scripture, rather than with the vehicle of his revelation, which is for us the literary composition known as the Bible. This book is not deified, but is seen as pointer to the Deity who still works today as he did in Biblical times... The Bible is primarily

> a witness to the manner in which God deals with man, rather than a source-book of doctrine or conceptual truth... The church and the individual believer should thus be Spirit-directed and Word-guided, where 'directed' means 'initiated/activated, empowered, pointed': while 'guided' means 'kept within acceptable parameters'.
>
> (Clark 1988: 1-2)

The close link between fundamentalist concerns and the *dispensational* approach to the scriptural record could create a problem (indeed, a severe tension) for the pentecostal hermeneute who would borrow from it. As Meloon argues, it seems that much of the evangelical denial of the validity of the *charismata* as phenomena for today's church is based not upon the obvious testimony of the New Testament but upon an *a priori* (dispensationalist) conviction that the gifts of the Spirit were for the first generation church alone[13] - hence the indignation of a charismatic evangelical expressed in the title of his work- *We've been robbed!* (Meloon 1971).[14]

Fee has identified with evangelical criticism of pentecostal exegesis in his denial that the *narrative portions of Scripture* may be used for formulating doctrine - as pentecostals apparently do in formulating the themes of 'subsequence' and 'initial evidence' upon the basis of the Acts narrative (Fee 1976:119-120). However, Menzies points out that many evangelicals are no longer so rigid with regard to limiting the normative value of narrative (Menzies 1994:119). McLean, with direct reference to the arguments of Dunn and Fee that pentecostals should adopt the conservative evangelical approach to Scripture, states bluntly:

> ... a strict adherence to traditional evangelical / fundamentalist hermeneutical principles leads to a position which, in its most positive form, suggests the distinctives of the twentieth century pentecostal movements are perhaps nice, but not necessary; important, but not vital to the life of the church in the twentieth century. In its more negative forms, it leads to a total rejection of pentecostal phenomena.
>
> (McLean 1984:37)

Sheppard argues similarly:

> I hope to show both that the pentecostals were not originally dispensationalist-fundamentalists and that the efforts secondarily to embrace such views have raised new problems for the identity of pentecostals - hermeneutically, sociologically and politically.
>
> (Sheppard 1984:5)

In the context of the debate about 'subsequence' and 'initial evidence', Menzies also argues for a distinctive pentecostal hermeneutic (Menzies 1985:5). In his benchmark work on fundamentalism Barr hesitates to include pentecostalism under that heading, despite the inclination to that paradigm among many prominent pentecostal personalities (Barr 1977:208). Although not specifically referring to pentecostalism, Dayton argues that the Wesleyan use of Scripture cannot be easily subsumed under the values and methods of twentieth century fundamentalism (Dayton 1985:130-134). Since the Methodist revivals and ethos are close antecedents of the modern pentecostal movement, his arguments are important for this study. They can be summarised as follows:

1. Fundamentalism (and its successor, neo-evangelicalism), has as a primary concern the preservation of the tenets of classical post-Reformation orthodoxy. Its concern is thus belief as *intellectual assent* to the confessions and dogma of that era. Methodism, in line with Pietism, does not share this particular concern as much as a concern for belief as a *living* experience of the truth of the Word.[15]

2. Wesleyanism was more amenable to some of the concerns of the Enlightenment, particularly historical awareness and the role of reason. Fundamentalism appears to wish to uphold the tenets of pre-Enlightenment orthodoxy against the *legitimate* historical and rational concerns of the Enlightenment.

3. Wesleyanism is not as concerned as fundamentalism with the crisis of *unbelief*, where what is to be believed is a matter of the mind. The 'whom' and 'how' of belief are more important than the 'what'. It is thus not as strongly challenged by the scepticism of the Enlightenment period.

4. Wesleyanism has been more conscious of *relativity* and *change* in the human social, historical and spiritual situation. The concern of fundamentalism has been with the immutable and absolute, and it is thus at heart *ahistorical*.

These arguments are important for pentecostals, as the very heart of the fundamentalist ethos appears to be conservatism, which is usually defensive and often leads to stagnation. Pentecostals share with their Anabaptist antecedents inclinations toward both conservatism (in maintaining a Biblical tradition of personal obedience) and radicalism (implicit in the apocalyptic nature of their encounter with God and the relativisation of worldly structures their eschatological expectation implies). Even more than Methodists, pentecostals are acquainted experientially with radical change, with continuing revelation, and with the relativity of human situations. This last confronts them in the very heterogeneity (plurality) of the worldwide pentecostal movement, in terms of language, culture, liturgy, class, and many other aspects. Despite a strong core of common experience and belief, the pentecostal movement is in itself probably the least homogenous manifestation of Christianity today. For such a movement to identify with the narrow interests of (particularly North American) fundamentalism could cause tension between what it *is* and what it would then purport to be.[16]

Wenger (1979) shows how a conservative approach to the Scriptures, from an Anabaptist perspective, can still cling to a belief in the accuracy of the literal record of the Bible without falling into the pitfalls of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. In this he shows similarities to Spittler (1985) and the position which is today coming to be regarded as representatively 'conservative evangelical' as distinct from 'fundamentalistic'. He wishes to move beyond the understandably reactionary position of fundamentalism (which has tended to crystallise the debate at the level at which the Bible was attacked by modernism over a century ago), and to understand the Bible in the light of the limitations inherent in the context of its human authorship and the scope of scientific knowledge (at both the time of its writing and of the beginnings of fundamentalism) (Wenger 1979:114-122).

Kraus (1979b:58-59) outlines the major distinctions between the Anabaptist tradition as it comes to expression in the Holiness-pentecostal movement, and the fundamentalist movement (by which he appears to mean the evangelicals). These include:

Pentecostalism is *charismatic*;	Fundamentalism is *didactic*.
Pentecostalism is *Wesleyan/Arminian*;	Fundamentalism is *Calvinistic*.

Gifts of Spirit provide assurance;	*Inerrant Scripture* provides assurance.
Experience-centred;	*Theology*-centred.
Non-rational elements recognised;	*Rational message* emphasised.
Church as *community*;	Church as *non-denominational fellowship*.
Separation of church and state;	*Christian nation* with legally separate church.
Holiness ethic (separation);	*Born-again* ethic - justified within the world.

Although not all pentecostals (or evangelicals) might agree with all the characterisations of the movement by this scholar, the contrast is sufficiently clear in this outline to show that there are significant differences between pentecostal and evangelical concerns when the Scriptures are approached and applied. In the South African situation, where the most significant evangelical movement is within the Dutch Reformed Church, these contrasts have been even more sharply delineated. The emotional charge that has accompanied pentecostal-evangelical debate in North America has been as evident in the pentecostal-Reformed debate in this country. Since the strongest point of contention has been the pentecostal practice of believers' baptism by immersion, the tensions have strongly paralleled those in Zürich in the 16th century.[17]

Sider argues that Anabaptists[18] need evangelicals, and evangelicals need Anabaptists; that if evangelicals were consistent they would be Anabaptists, and if Anabaptists were consistent they would be evangelicals. Of relevance to this study are his comments which describe the Anabaptist tradition: committed to the central confessions of Christianity; strongly evangelical (in fact the Anabaptists were the first 'modern' missionaries); and committed to the full authority of Scripture as the norm for faith and practice: this very commitment was the heart of their dispute with Luther and Zwingli (Sider 1979:149-150). He maintains that what Bible-believing evangelicals could learn from Anabaptists, because such tenets are 'biblical', includes

> an emphasis on costly discipleship, on living the Christian life, on the church as a new society living the ethics of the kingdom (and therefore living a set of values radically different from the world), on the way of the cross as the Christian approach to violence.
>
> (Sider 1979:150).

The major contribution that evangelicalism can make to Anabaptism, according to Sider, is to emphasise that orthopraxy is not a substitute for orthodoxy, and that commitment to the way of radical discipleship cannot dispense with the Biblical witness to the history of that discipleship, including commitment to belief in the resurrection and divine nature of the Jesus who is being followed (:154ff).[19]

The pentecostal movement will continue to share with the evangelical movement a commitment to evangelisation and to Biblical truth. The way in which the latter is determined and understood, however, may continue to differ substantially. If the debate within much of pentecostalism continues to remain at the level of 'pro-evangelical versus anti-evangelical' hermeneutics, a disservice could be done to the world pentecostal community, where many local pentecostal groups are neither challenged nor confronted by evangelicalism to the same extent as their North American peers. However, since both pentecostals and evangelicals desire to be identified as Bible-based and Bible-loving, they have no option but to consider their relationship to one another on a brotherly and on-going basis.

3.2 Socio-political contextual theologies.[20]

The concern of twentieth century Christianity to be 'relevant' has found its strongest theological expression during the last 3 decades in concentration on the *context* within which theology is done. Within ecumenical circles in particular this has often been expressed in a concern for the *socio-political* context, and for the *effect* of theologising on that context. Until fairly recently such concern was scarcely felt among First World pentecostals, but in the last decade it has become an issue in particularly Latin American and South African pentecostal churches.[21]

The concern in a New Testament study is not to deal comprehensively with the issue of liberation and political theologies, but with the way in which pentecostals sympathetic to that school have used the Bible. During the last ten years the largest pentecostal group in Southern Africa, the Apostolic Faith Mission, has strongly felt the heat of the debate surrounding such

theologies. Recently the matter has come to a head in the movement toward unity in a church originally divided along racial lines.[22] While so much theologising in pentecostal circles has been done on the presupposition that the White middle-class North American churches are the epitome of classical pentecost (e g Cargal's self-imposed limitations in discussing pentecostal hermeneutics (1993:166) and Sheppard's rejoinder (1994:122-124)), there are pentecostals who do not fit that mould who wish to find other categories in which to express themselves, that are more suited to their social context.[23]

I have dealt with the contextual approach to theology and Scripture fairly comprehensively in my research on Jürgen Moltmann (Clark 1989:29-37 deals with his use of Scripture in detail), and do not wish to use an inordinate amount of space to repeat it here. The following is a shortened description of the political contextual hermeneutic.

The basic argument of political contextual theology concerning Scripture is centred on the so-called *political hermeneutic* and the *action-reflection method*. The former is the understanding that the social and political contexts within which the Scriptures are read *determine* (not merely *affect*) the way the Scriptures are understood. Jürgen Moltmann argues forcefully that this also implies that

> ..... the Bible is the book of the poor, the oppressed, the hopeless. It is not the book of ruling priests and lords. It is also not a book of laws for the just, but of promises for the hopeless and of the gospel of God for sinners. In order to read this book properly, therefore, we must read it with the eyes, and in the community, of the poor, the godless and the unjust....
>
> (Moltmann 1975:6-7)

Within this context the Bible can now be read and applied according to a particular method.

> The hermeneutical method this leads to is called in ecumenical discussion 'the action-reflection method'. Christian hope motivates those who hope for the liberating act of love. The historical practice of liberation, however, must be reflected upon and criticised in its effects and consequences in the light of this hope.
>
> (Moltmann 1984:107)

Motlhabi (1987: 6ff) describes liberation theology's use of the Bible as follows: The term

'liberation' calls attention to a state of oppression which calls out for relief. 'Theology' refers to the Word of God. 'There can be no liberation theology without the Bible, which is the primary source of the Word of God.' (:6). The Word of God to Moses at the burning bush could be seen as a starting point for liberation theology - indeed, the entire Exodus account provides a model for the way God acts in history, and therefore a model for liberation. Motlhabi chooses to reject a literal interpretation of Scripture.[24] He describes the process of liberation theology's use of the Bible as follows:

> In current situations of oppression, liberation theologies see and experience what is happening to people today, try to make sense of it, see how similar situations were given significance in the Bible, and noting the similarities, interpret their own situations accordingly. At the same time it is acknowledged that the Bible is not a step-by-step guide in how to respond to or deal with the current situation. That is why its interpretation is more important than its application. It does appear, consequently, that we have to recognise different degrees of interpretation and understanding of different Biblical texts and different degrees of applying them to current situations in accordance with situational demands.
>
> (Motlhabi 1987:10-11)

Deist equates the liberation theology approach to the Bible with Marxist textual reading[25], and concludes:

> We can thus say that a Marxist reading of a text has at least two aims: the first is to unmask ideologies, and the second to supply paradigms of action towards liberation. In so far as Marxist readings of the Bible are aimed at the uncovering of implied ideological systems therein, we can speak of 'theoretical Marxism'. In so far as Marxist readings of the Bible are aimed at supplying paradigms of action for liberation we can speak of 'practical Marxism'.
>
> (Deist 1987:23-24)

Both Motlhabi and Deist thus confirm that the prime use of Scripture in liberation or marxist theory is *functional*, and that the reason and purpose for its use is based upon a pre-conceived understanding of the socio-political status of a group of people who are deemed to require liberation.

The most prominent South African pentecostal to espouse this particular approach to the Scriptures has been Chikane. His personal history is documented in his autobiography entitled *No life of my own* (Chikane 1988a). The title itself reflects the prominence he has given to socio-political context - Chikane considers himself a *product* of both apartheid and his

commitment to the 'liberation' struggle against it (he states this specifically in the preface to the work). Introduced to Black Consciousness during his student days at University of the North (Pietersburg, South Africa), Chikane's experience of his white-led church was largely negative. As an ordained pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission, his pastoral concerns brought him into conflict with both the white church authorities, and the South African police. Detained and tortured by the security police in the turbulent 70's and 80's, he was defrocked by the church (the grounds given by the White church leadership were that he had 'meddled in politics'), but found recognition in the ecumenical movement. After a number of years as director of the Institute for Contextual Theology in Johannesburg, he was appointed Secretary General of the South African Council of Churches. After re-instatement by the Apostolic Faith Mission as a pastor, he was elected President of the Composite Division of the AFM, the merger group of Asian, Black and Coloured (mixed race) AFM churches. In April 1996 he was elected Vice-president of the now-united AFM, by the total church community of all races.

Chikane's involvement in political liberation was anathema to most White pentecostals in South Africa[26]. Although he is obviously popular at grass-roots level among Black pentecostals, his personal approach to the Bible and theology does not seem to be crucial to Black pentecostal ministry. The largest portion of Black pentecostal pastors in South Africa has been trained in missions-sponsored Bible Colleges, often in the evangelical paradigm. In Africa north of the Limpopo one seldom hears of political or liberation theology in pentecostal circles, although the election of Frederick Chiluba, a pentecostal, as president of Zambia, is raising some interesting issues for pentecostalism and politics in that country.[27]

Chikane was the motivating force behind the publication of the *Kairos Document* (1985) by the Institute for Contextual Theology: he was the Director of the Institute at that time (and also one of only two pentecostal signatories, of a total of 156). This document illustrates (indeed, sets out explicitly, as part of its main argument) the methodology of the contextual approach: first, to do a social analysis; then, to consider the rights and the wrongs in the socio-political situation, and take up the option for the poor and oppressed; then to begin doing what protestant Christians have traditionally understood to be theology, viz to approach the Bible on the matter (Kairos Document 1985:15ff). The Bible (as the door to Christian theology) is

thus approached solely *inductively*.[28] It is not consulted during the initial formulation of the social analysis - that is done from a secular point of departure. Nor is it consulted in offering a solution - that is left to revolutionary theory. The role of the Bible is to be co-opted into the struggle, a tool to be used, along with the churches and the churchmen (and secular groups such as the trade-unions, media, student bodies, etc), against a non-socialist regime.[29]

Chikane's testimony is that he has undergone a theological development from where he no longer understands the Bible from what he terms a 'fundamentalistic' perspective, where it could be seen as a book of absolutes. He now realises that the message of the Bible and the God it portrays is relative - to the writer and a specific (socio-political) context, to the reader, and to the group which proclaims it (Chikane 1988b:152-153). The Bible is thus not just used inductively, it is also used social-critically (Beyerhaus 1987:7) However, it may be argued that he does recognise an alternative absolute to Scripture: the socio-political context, as defined by his chosen social-analysis (Chikane 1988b:157-158)[30].

The conflict between Chikane and his church was not *solely* a product of his own ideological convictions. The AFM from the '50's to the '70's was profoundly influenced by Afrikaner nationalism. Not only Blacks were alienated by the prevalent attitude - most liberal English-speaking South African Whites also forsook the group. Many of the arguments used by the leaders of the AFM to condemn activists such as Chikane were cast in a blatantly post-Constantinian (state-church) frame of reference, and were a denial of the free-church ethos inherited from the radical Reformation and the Holiness movement. Many of the leading personalities were also sympathetic to the Reformed manner of doing theology, and at times appeared to lament the distance between Afrikaners of pentecostal persuasion and those of the Calvinist 'covenant' churches. There were also determined attempts to overcome that distance, and English-speakers and non-Whites in the AFM were treated as peripheral to this major concern, not least because these were the groups who rejected the *apartheid* mentality of Afrikaner nationalism. The *political* critique offered by Chikane and others was thus not totally inappropriate to the South African pentecostal church situation[31].

The socio-political contextual hermeneutic has been propounded and promoted primarily in the

context of those departments of theological science which are not specifically exegetical, particularly by systematic theologians. However, the contemporary shift of hermeneutical focus among the biblical theological sciences, from concentration upon the author and his intent to a greater interest in the form of the text and its effect, is very much a parallel and contributory phenomena. In a later section of this chapter the viability of post-modern hermeneutics and literary theories within the context of the pentecostal movement and its theology will be dealt with.

The attraction of the political contextual theologies for many pentecostals is understandable. Where injustices in society penetrate even into the church itself, those who object will often utilise every tool at their disposal to rectify the situation. Since many pentecostals are articulate and dynamic speakers and leaders, they have often been turned to by the oppressed for help and guidance in situations of injustice. This was certainly the case with Chikane, as well as with another former pentecostal, Cyril Ramaphosa. The social-analysis offered by these theologies (whether accurate / realistic or not) also supplies a hermeneutical key to understanding the social processes in which the oppressed are suffering, and the role of the church in tacitly or overtly supporting them. It is this not surprising that the tacit alliance between the leadership of the AFM of South Africa and the National Party government should have led not only to a schism among its white members in 1958, but also to the rise of articulate proponents of the political theologies and even of the liberation movements themselves[32].

However, apart from these social influences, the radically critical stance taken by the political theologies with regard to status quo politics, theologies and church positioning is also in line with the radical alternative status inherited by pentecostalism from Anabaptism and the Holiness movement.[33] Where it might be inconsistent for protestant churchmen, many of whose churches support a church-state alliance or territorial church, to criticise status quo politics, it is eminently consistent with the ethos of a group which has the theological and social antecedents that pentecostals do. In South Africa the political theologies have done the free churches a service in opening their eyes to the implications and consequences of the church's alliances, both overt and tacit. The position of radical critic and radical alternative community

is more Biblically tenable (according to the Anabaptist and pentecostal use of Scripture as a manual of discipleship) than is the position of collaborationist or *lassez faire*. It is thus tragic that the South African pentecostal community did not realise how confrontational to the politics of the government its day-to-day discipleship should have been.[34]

However, while the radically critical stance of the political theologies is consistent with the pentecostal ethos, it is less certain that the role assigned the Scriptures in those theologies is equally consistent. When the Bible is held to be the sort of discipleship manual that pentecostals and their antecedents have maintained, then is it is too much a *source* book of insight and values to be relegated to the apparently subsidiary role (a *tool* to be utilised) allocated to it by the political theologies. If it is true that the biblical theological sciences are crucial to pentecostal theologising, then the exegetical process within the movement will probably be more deductive than inductive (as defined in this section) in the context of the entire theological process. This would imply that not only is the Bible adequate for *addressing* social situations within and without the church; it is also adequate for *defining* those situations. While the Bible is obviously not a text-book of sociology or political science, it is also not silent on the dynamics of inter-human and divine-human interaction. If this is recognised, and the radically critical values of the pentecostal ethos taken to a logical conclusion, then the pentecostal community should have submitted not only the policies and values of the previous South African government to critical scrutiny, but also those of the liberationists. Then, on the basis of insights *obtained* from the Scriptures, the pentecostal community might have lived out its role as *alternative* community: alternative to both the status quo political movements as well as the revolutionary, and to the allies of both, whether in or outside of the church.[35]

3.3 The Kenyon-Hagin-Copeland group.

One of the most significant recent developments in the pentecostal-charismatic movement has been the startling growth of the so-called 'word-faith', or 'faith-formula' groups. These found their origin in the values and teachings of E W Kenyon, particularly as mediated by his disciples, Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland[36].

In South Africa the teaching of these groups initially formed a sharp contrast to 'traditional' pentecostal thinking. However, in recent years some of the more radical and less defensible tenets appear to have been laid aside, while on the other hand many pentecostals have adopted in particular the music and worship styles of these groups. Their rapid growth and high media visibility has also enabled them to significantly affect mainline pentecostalism, and an area where this is obvious is in the approach to and use of the Scriptures. The militant assertions of their leaders that they are committed to a Bible-based Christianity finds favour with many grass-roots pentecostals, and attempts by pentecostal teachers to encourage a more responsible approach to the text are often derided as 'fleshly intellectualism'. It is probably true that the methods of this 'axis' provide a significant challenge to pentecostal theologising, particularly since (unlike other trends such as contextualism and post-modernism) the effect is felt strongest at grass-roots level.[37]

These groups share a basic fundamentalist approach to the Scriptures, and combine this with a simplistic and biblicistic method. This leads to their often basing cardinal doctrines upon verses taken out of both literary and historical context.[38] Fundamental to their use of the Bible are two principles: the notion of 'revelational knowledge'; and a strong underlying theological presupposition which the teachers not only fail to recognise, but which they also vehemently deny exists at all.

McConnell (1988:103-115) has given a comprehensive analysis of this former aspect of the faith teaching. According to him, it comes largely from the writings of E W Kenyon, and is based upon a thorough-going dualism which associates human reason with the flesh and the senses (negative) and divine knowledge with the spirit (positive). Divine knowledge of both God and the legitimate meaning of the Bible are thus received by revelation, not by disciplined and critical perusal of the Scriptures. For this reason the works of the faith teachers are riddled with the phrase 'God/the Lord/Jesus told me....'. What these leaders have received by revelational knowledge may not be rationally tested nor questioned. Those who do may experience dire consequences.[39] As a result the movement takes on a cultic ambience, where knowledge and truth are associated with the *interpreter* and not the *interpretation* of Scripture. Deriding theologians is a popular pulpit technique of many of the Faith teachers.

McConnell points out how this point of departure leads to gnosticism, and fits Bultmann's analysis of the phenomenon precisely: dualism, anti-rationalism and classification of 'superiors' and 'inferiors' (McConnell:109-110; see also Swaggart 1981b, and Farah 1980b:15-16. Carson 1987:121 considers this sort of abuse to flow logically from the notion of untested prophetic utterances).

Horn (1989:104-108) agrees with McConnell's description of the role of revelational knowledge in the faith movement, but is less concerned that it is dangerous. He maintains that much non-pentecostal criticism against the faith movement is at the same time rejective of the basic pentecostal charismata (Hunt & MacMahon 1985 and Verryn 1983 are examples of such critical works). That the leaders receive revelational knowledge is not the primary problem for pentecostals, since they too believe in ongoing revelation. But their basic gnosticism is, since this makes it unacceptable to test such knowledge by means of human reason, or elevates the person receiving it to a plane higher than other Christians, once again often beyond *any* criticism.

What Horn finds of greater concern is the basic hermeneutics of the movement (1989:110-112). The teachers fail to recognise that their approach to the Bible is not simply 'I read it and I believe it', as they would claim (e g Steele 1986:120 claims that Ray McCauley 'puts the Bible above any theologian's ideas or concepts of God'). In fact, Horn maintains, they have a powerful and dominant hermeneutical key - an unrealistic radical realised eschatology. Thus in the name of straightforward biblical exegesis their hermeneutical key forces them to explain away Scripture embarrassing to their theology, such as the evil spirit sent from God (Hagin 1983:13) and the thorn in Paul's flesh (G Copeland 1972:58). K Copeland at least admits that John 10:10 is his hermeneutical key (K Copeland 1974:63) - in fact, it functions as an absolute key, although he does not seem to recognise this.

Horn notes that the real problem with the faith teachers does not lie in their bringing theological presuppositions to the Bible: after all, it is impossible not to do so. However, for honesty's sake the nature and role of such a key must be recognised by the exegete for what it is. Horn says:

> Even the traditional pentecostal (and mainline protestant) belief that the Holy Spirit is the final interpreter of Scripture can hardly function within the framework of the presuppositions of the Faith Movement.
>
> (Horn 1989:112)

Also

> If their presupposition - an unrealistic radical eschatology - is tested, the weakness of their approach to the Bible becomes clear. *The Bible can only speak within the framework of the preconception that God wants to give His children heaven on earth here and now.* (Horn's italics)
>
> (Horn 1989:112)

It may also be argued that this is not the sole key to the Scriptures in the Faith movement. In fact, like virtually everything else in this system, it has been inherited *in toto* by Hagin and Copeland from E W Kenyon (McConnell 1988:12-14). Thus the views of Kenyon on the spiritual death of Jesus, the power of words, positive and negative confession, and 'identification', have been accepted uncritically into the Faith movement's theology. They are not the fruit of exegesis, even from the point of view of radical realised eschatology - they are clear and often verbatim imports from Kenyon's thinking (Horn 1989:60-61; Matta 1987; Barron 1987). This is probably deferment to the canonicity of the revelational knowledge received by Kenyon.[40]

Neither Hunt & MacMahon's (1985) attack on the Faith movement, nor the response of Reid, Virkler, Laine & Langstaff (1986), have much to say about *how* the Bible is used by the movement (despite the title of the former). The focus is rather on their allegedly cultic and occultic practises. This is not true of a most recent apologetic work from the Faith movement (DeArteaga 1992), which is theologically articulate and makes much use of historical and hermeneutical categories - a welcome contribution at formal theological level from the movement.

The challenge of the hermeneutical approach of the Faith movement to the pentecostal movement cannot be ignored. Its aspects are legion, among them being:

i) It encourages the growth of personality cults, versus the free-church notion of

the priesthood of all believers;

ii) It breeds an atmosphere of chauvinistic anti-intellectualism, versus a love for truth and the desire to search the Scriptures;

iii) It limits the scope of the impact of the Scriptures in any given situation, providing a one-dimensional interpretation;

iv) It exalts the teaching of one man (Kenyon) to the level of canon, versus the notion of personal discipleship of *Christ*;

iv) it holds out hope of a simple interpretation of Scripture, thereby appealing to grass-roots Christians, but delivers only a highly nuanced simplistic message which it insists may not be questioned; this versus the long-held pentecostal notions of testing the spirits and spiritual utterances, and the need to work out one's own salvation in fear and trembling.

Pentecostals nevertheless may still learn from some of the more acceptable emphases of the Faith movement. Swaggart acknowledges that pentecostals of the post-war years have grown up in a retiring and apologetic environment, and that the confidence and vigour of the Faith congregations can be held up as an example to them (Swaggart 1981a). Pentecostals should be prepared to learn from anyone. However, it must be clear to the serious pentecostal thinker that in the area of hermeneutics the Faith movement does not offer a well-considered approach to the Scriptures. This may present an area of continuing confrontation between classical pentecostal theology and the Faith movement for some time to come.

3.4 (Post)-modern literary theory

Byrd sums up the development of the search for hermeneutical categories adequate for pentecostalism as follows:

> Early on, there was a debate about the exegesis of narrative passages which were deemed to be essential to pentecostal identity. During this time, the issue was the relation between hermeneutics and theology....
>
> The second segment in the discussion of pentecostal hermeneutics was a prescription of methodology. The discussion ..... moved toward discovering pentecostal methods

of reading and interpreting texts.....

> The third segment of the hermeneutical discussion can be described as a dialogue with classical hermeneuticians. It provided a link for pentecostals with theoretical hermeneutics.
>
> (Byrd 1993:205-206)

While a clear development can be noted over the last two decades, it is doubtful whether any of these steps has actually superseded the others. What *has* happened is that pentecostal scholars are taking a greater interest in the world of hermeneutical theory as it has developed since Schleiermacher. While some are currently attracted to the possibilities offered by the literary theory of Gadamer and (particularly) Ricoeur (Cargal 1993; Byrd 1993), others are equally adamant that this is not a viable option for pentecostals (Menzies 1994). Whether or not this latter point of view holds any validity, the exegesis of narrative portions which are important to pentecostalism, and the development of a distinctive pentecostal methodology are by no means obsolete issues.

Gadamer and Ricoeur have been labelled 'post-modern' by some pentecostal scholars who study them, both those who approve of them and those who do not (e g Cargal and Menzies respectively, also Harrington & Patten 1994). When one considers some of the extreme forms of post-modernism (post-historical, post-critical, post-Christian, post-rational) which permeate Western culture of the 1990's, Gadamer and Ricoeur appear far less post-modern in contrast. They do not descend to the extremes of relativism of meaning expounded by deconstructionists such as Derrida.[41] Sheppard sees Ricoeur as significant for pentecostals because

> .... he goes beyond Gadamer in the modern debate and because he supports a relatively traditional, late modern hermeneutical strategy that remains pre-deconstructionist.
>
> ..... Precisely because Ricoeur espouses a relatively conservative, latemodern approach, his hermeneutical proposal is ideal for a responsible theological apologetic of pentecostal experience to the larger academic world.
>
> (Sheppard 1994:124-125)

It is difficult to find a definition of the term 'post-modern' which can be used normatively.[42] There is no such thing as a formal philosophical school, with leading systematic exponents, which could be called 'post-modern', although there are well-known exponents of some of its

particular manifestations, such as Michel Foucault. Like 'modernist', it would appear to be a label attached to writers, artists, thinkers and others who espouse its values, or lack thereof. It may be understood primarily as a *phenomenon*, and therefore is a way of thinking which is analytically described more in discussions and attempts to define its parameters, than in the works of its proponents. Although the term 'post-modern' has been a fairly recent addition to the academic terminology, the phenomenon it describes has been evident for some time, particularly in the arts.[43] Descriptions of post-modernism often refer to differences in emphases among those who work within its parameters, and the movement, if such it may be termed, cannot therefore be seen as a monolithic whole, but rather as a *tendency*. [44]

Post-modernism can be understood among other things as a reaction to and development from modernism. Even this category is not simple to define, since much of the way we think about modernism itself, in these last years of the twentieth century, has been derived from its characterisation (caricaturization?) by post-modernists (Guinness 1994:104). The extent of the reaction will often determine the extent to which post-modernists will go in the process of relativisation. Griffin (1993b:23ff) claims that the constructive postmodernism he describes can be 'antifoundationalist' without being 'radically antifoundationalist' or holding to extreme relativism. The same could probably not be said of the extreme relativism in deconstructive post-modernism (:4). Post-modernism confronts the notion of absolutes, and therefore of truth itself. For this reason the discussion of *truth* has become a major interest in the modernism/post-modernism philosophical interface.[45]

Johns (1995:80ff) argues that the post-modern world-view can be described as an Open Systems paradigm, an emerging systemic worldview. The inherent relativity of such a world-view would then stem initially and primarily from the Einsteinian notion of the universe and the theory of relativity he propounded. The new paradigm is thus understood by Johns to be growing from a scientific paradigm, rather than from any particular cultural (art, music, theatre, etc) reaction to modernism.[46] Relevant to this study is Johns' comment that the openness to 'God-talk' and the supernatural of the new systemic worldview does not equate with the biblical theism of pentecostalism (1995:96)

Gadamer and Ricoeur both operate within the field of interest of later twentieth century literary theory. Although this field of interest should not be summarily labelled 'post-modern', there are some generalisations that can be made, and that certainly have reference to both these scholars. Longman, discussing the pitfalls of modern literary theory for Bible interpretation, states under the heading *Contemporary theory denies referential function to literature*:

> The last pitfall is the most significant. Along with the move away from the author in contemporary theory, one can also note the tendency to deny or to limit severely any referential function to literature..... Literature in this view represents not an insight into the world, but rather a limitless semiotic play.
>
> (Longman 1987:54)

> In any case the rupture between the literary and the referential is an axiom of modern literary theory. As one might expect, recognition of the literary characteristics of the Bible has led scholars to equate the Bible and literature, with the corollary that the Bible as a literary text does not refer outside of itself, and in particular, makes no reference to history. This position leads on the part of some to a complete or substantial denial of a historical approach to the text, which most often takes the form of denying or denigrating traditional historical-critical methods.
>
> (Longman 1987:55)[47]

This might explain how both the protagonists and the detractors of Gadamer and Ricoeur could label them 'post-modern': in line with most contemporary literary theorists, their interest is not primarily in the objective truth or historicity of the text, nor in the intent of the author. 'Meaning' cannot (in the sense of 'understanding'), as in the modernist idiom, be reduced to the historical context and intention. A cardinal question for pentecostals will be: do these scholars allow any referential function to literature at all, and if so, how much? The question must also arise: to what extent must the Bible be seen to function as 'literature', in the contemporary sense, or the sense in which Gadamer and Ricoeur understand literature?[48]

Ricoeurian categories and terminology have been evident in scholarly pentecostal debate for some time, e g the paper by Plüss, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the SPS at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1988, entitled *Second Naïvete: Viable approach or Idealist escape: Reflections on a hermeneutic problem in a renewal movement*. However, the lines of debate were probably first clearly demarcated in the Fall 1993 (15/2) and Spring 1994 (16/1) issues of the journal

of the Society for Pentecostal studies, *Pneuma*. An outline of this debate as it proceeded in those two issues is relevant to this study.

The contribution by Cargal in *Pneuma* 15/2 elicited most response in the 16/1 issue, probably because, as Menzies notes:

> ... it was lucid, insightful, and ultimately disturbing .... Cargal's skills are evident and I commend him for communicating his postmodern vision of the future in such a clear and compelling way.
>
> (Menzies 1994:115)

Cargal is concerned that the debate concerning hermeneutics in North America's classical pentecostal churches has been uncritical of the underlying assumptions of the fundamentalist-modernist debate. To his mind, the conservative evangelical (which he does not hesitate to term 'fundamentalist') reaction to the scepticism of modernism has not significantly challenged the underlying assumptions of the modernist paradigm, viz a positivist view of history. This, he maintains, is proved by the fundamentalist assertion that, if it is historical, then it is true. Thus in this paradigm truth can only be understood in terms of history (Cargal 1993:167-169).[49] If pentecostals continue to operate within this paradigm, says Cargal, they are in danger of becoming irrelevant in the post-modern world. The primary concerns here would be:

1. As Gordon Fee and William and Robert Menzies have already consistently implied in their exegesis (so he alleges), the meaning of Scripture becomes limited to the intent of the author (Cargal 1993:164). In Ricoeurian terms, the evangelicalisation of pentecostal scholarship leaves their interpretation at the level of *explanation* and fails to push toward an attempt at *understanding*;

2. 'Moreover, it is my contention that if pentecostals in particular and Christians more generally do not find ways of interpreting the Bible which are meaningful to people living in this postmodern age, their interpretation of the Bible will increasingly be perceived as irrelevant.' (:165); 'As a postmodern paradigm increasingly dominates the thinking of our culture in general, any hermeneutic

which cannot account for its loci of meanings within that postmodern paradigm will become nonsensical and irrelevant' (:187);

3. A post-modern approach to the Scripture would enable meaning and sense to be made of those portions of narrative which historical criticism has shown to be not 'historically true' (:178);

4. Post-modernism 'provides a philosophical space within which it is meaningful to speak of an encounter with transcendent reality, the Spirit of God' (:178);

5. The varieties of human experiences - not just of the Spirit, but of being male or female, Black or White, culturally diverse; these 'are legitimate means for appropriating one or several of the multiple meaning-producing dimensions of the biblical texts' (:181);[50]

6. Referring to Matthew's record of Pilate's hand-washing, omitted by the other evangelists: 'From a postmodern perspective, it is the issue of its function within the story that is more important than its historical reliability' (Cargal 1993:185);

7. The historical origin and transmission of narrative is no longer a crucial element in its interpretation. 'Rather, it is the system of meaningful relationships constructed within the narrative itself (e g semiotic and literary criticism) and how that system both was shaped by and shaped the social matrix in which it emerged (e g sociological analysis) that seems most interesting and meaningful to interpreters' (:186);

Cargal's exposition and plea is extremely lucidly articulated, and makes clear what other contributors intimate perhaps less forcefully. Consider the following from other scholars in the same volume:

> Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer, in our judgement, have changed the way in which pentecostals need to think about hermeneutics. Pentecostals need to break away from the notion that hermeneutics is the search for a unique set of principles which pentecostals use in their biblical interpretations. They also need to move beyond the notion that the province of hermeneutics is the search for proper procedures to translate the one exegetical meaning of a biblical text into its many implications for today.
> (Israel, Albrecht & McNally 1993:161)

What *is* made explicit here is that the 'multiplicity of meanings' the proponents of post-modern hermeneutics hope to achieve is not attached to the notion of multiple implications for today (something pentecostals would not argue about), but exists at 'exegetical' level; exegesis is a process which includes self-consciousness of the role of ritual, community and Scripture texts in the process (:161). In fact, Israel, on the basis of Ricoeurian categories, actually elevates pentecostal community and ritual to the level of a text (:152-154; 160-161).

Both Plüss and Byrd borrow from the hermeneutical categories of Ricoeur. Byrd seeks to make pentecostal preaching less sterile, referring to complaints by seminary-trained pentecostal preachers that the historical-critical approach to obtaining meaning is stressed to the point that they do not adequately reach their audience (Byrd 1993:213-214). He therefore attempts to establish a methodology by which a Ricoeurian system may be applied in preparing a sermon or study (:212-213).

Plüss is concerned that the modern pentecostal movement no longer exhibits the dynamic of the early movement. What was experienced then has been reduced to theological categories now (Plüss 1993:190-192). By using the Ricoeurian categories of myth and mimesis, he believes contemporary pentecostalism can re-appropriate the symbols of Azusa Street, and rediscover the dynamic which worked then:

> Analogically, it is my conviction that those people who insist on the propositional character of the early history of the pentecostal movement have in fact adopted the same fallacy as historicity.... Consequently, we can say that the new pentecost at Azusa is a mythic narrative, because as we shall see, it relates events to the divine and collective human awareness. As collective human awareness is often entrenched in subconscious visions and convictions, we shortly need to turn to psycho-analytical approaches so that we will be able to help pentecostals differentiate between drawing from the subjective depths of their own wells and acknowledging divine grace where

> it inevitably leads to a surplus of meaning and the potential for a deeper spirituality.
> (Plüss 1993:197)

Plüss would perhaps impress pentecostals critical of the post-modern approach because he has taken fairly recent history and treated it as a Ricoeurian 'text', rather than addressed Ricoeur's method to the text of Scripture. His final conclusion is that it is insufficient merely to make a statement about the past, and that pentecostals should 'become entangled in this narrative in order to ponder its meaning for the present and to commit ourselves to God and neighbour in the name of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit' (1993:200-201). This is more similar to deriving multiple *implications* for today from historical narrative than it is to the true Ricoeurian notion of multiplicity of *meanings* in the text.

The response to the protagonists of Ricoeur has been mixed, although only one of the responses in the following issue of *Pneuma* (16/1) rejected such a position outright (Menzies), while another appears more ambivalent (Harrington & Patten). For that reason Menzies may be as lucid a spokesperson for the opposite position as Cargal has been for proponents. However, first the response of others must be considered.

The major thrust of Arrington's response (1994) is that although the historical dimension cannot be ignored, it should not be absolutised. He appears to agree with Cargal that academic pentecostal exegesis as represented by Fee, Stronstad and Menzies has been 'evangelicalised' (1994:101), while pentecostal preachers adopt a less restrictive approach. Thus he comments:

> Indeed the traditional methods of pentecostal interpretation that emphasise multiple meanings and applications of a text have more continuity with postmodern modes of interpretation than the critical-historical methodology of much of contemporary pentecostal scholarship.
> (Arrington 1994:102)[51]

Harrington & Patten offer a considered response: while appreciating the scholarly insights of Cargal, Israel and Byrd (1994:109, 114), they take issue with their positive assessment of Ricoeur on a number of issues. They differ with Israel on his attempt to understand ritual as a text, and community as anything other than context (:110-111). They wonder whether Cargal has not merely replaced historical criticism with the literary sort (:112). They are concerned

that too great a distanciation from the historical context, in the name of 'inspired' exegesis, could lead to intense subjectivity in interpretation (:113), something of which a spirit-movement as old as the pentecostal movement has well-documented experience. Their summary adequately expresses their concerns:

> ... First, while the work of socio-anthropologists is helpful in describing a community through its texts and rituals, the presuppositions of both they and pentecostals must not be ignored.... Second, while some aspects of literary criticism (e.g. reader appropriation) may inform a pentecostal hermeneutic, it is important to keep in mind what is not helpful, namely, the indifference of many biblical literary critics to reader appropriation as well as to cultural and historical text analysis; the latter might well provide necessary controls on subjective interpretation. Finally, for pentecostals, the possibilities for interpretation of the text are circumscribed by fixed principles inherent in the text itself. In adopting Ricoeurian theory, one must distinguish, as Ricoeur does not, between a text which is sacred, and therefore fixed in very important ways, and a text which is not.
>
> (Harrington & Patten 1994:114)

Some of Sheppard's comments have already been noted above. His initial response to the essayists in *Pneuma* 15/2 is positive - at last pentecostal scholarship is emerging which is able to account for itself on the lecterns of public scholarly opinion (Sheppard 1994:121-122). However, he feels the approaches need to be addressed at two major points: socio-cultural descriptions of pentecostal history, ritual and community; and 'general hermeneutics' as a point of departure for re-describing pentecostal experience and biblical interpretation (:122).

On the first point he expresses disappointment that the stereotypes of pentecostalism assumed by Cargal, Israel and Plüss are not informed by non-white pentecostalism, nor by input by non-pentecostal leaders from such cultural groups outside of pentecostalism. Thus any discussion they have offered is robbed of the richness of illustration afforded by the plurality of communities within pentecostalism (:122-124).[52]

The larger part of Sheppard's reaction is devoted to his second point of criticism: the inadequacy of 'general hermeneutics' in interpreting Scripture. He points out that the father of general hermeneutics, Schleiermacher, appealed strongly for a special hermeneutic for the Bible (:130). After a lengthy discourse on what Christians have understood as the 'literal sense'

of the Scriptures (generally guided by a form of *midrash* such as the early confessions or the *regulae fidei*), he makes the following remarks concerning Ricoeur:

> .... The current tendency to allow modern or postmodern general hermeneutics to predetermine the nature and possibilities of interpretation, followed by subsequent effort to fit scriptural interpretation into it as a special case, may not do justice to Christian interpretation of Scripture .... In fact, I think Ricoeur proves to be at his best *as a Christian interpreter of Scripture* precisely when his protestant preunderstanding intrudes, without clear justification, into his general hermeneutical theory. ...
>
> In my view, Ricoeur's methodology cannot do justice either to the traditional conception of the literal sense of Scripture or to another traditional Christian dimension, enthusiastically shared by pentecostals, of divine encounter in the hearing of Scripture and a 'spiritual' response to it, in terms of gestures of praise, songs, the shout, interjections of 'Amen', words of prayer, glossolalia, the holy dance, etc.
>
> (Sheppard 1994:135-136)

Although Sheppard identifies with the debunking of the historicist approach to interpretation, he has reservations concerning the categorisation of traditional pentecostal use of the Bible:

> Several of these *Pneuma* essays brilliantly attack the modern hegemony of 'author's intent', together with its simplistic consequence in terms of what a biblical text 'meant' and what it 'means'. Nonetheless, the use of Ricoeur did not prevent a temptation followed by some of the essays to assume that all older pentecostal biblical interpretation is essentially the result of 'first naïvete' (Byrd) or is 'precritical' or 'uncritical' (Cargal). ..... Using an insight from James Washington's study of African-American churches, I would ... prefer to call the classical pentecostal heritage 'submodern' rather than 'premodern' or 'precritical'. Most older pentecostals were acclimated to cultural values of the lower classes or to racially marginalised groups, and were not invited as equal partners into the modernist debate.
>
> (Sheppard 1994:126-127)

Menzies response is more directly confrontational. Although complimentary of Cargal's communicative skills, he is unequivocal in his rejection of the hope of finding a pentecostal hermeneutic in the post-modern paradigm. He is scathingly dismissive of the other essays, dismissing them as 'a barrage of Ricoeurian rhetoric', 'laden with jargon' (Menzies 1994:115). His summary of Cargal's argument is terse (:115), and his counter-arguments are based on the deficiencies of the post-modern approach rather than on the apparent needs and vulnerability of the pentecostal position in a post-modern era. They may be summarised as follows:

1. Post-modernism as propounded by Cargal would loose the text from its historical origins and intent; this would lead to a multiplicity of meanings, each relative to its interpreter and his context: 'A philosophical paradigm and a hermeneutical method which cannot distinguish between truth and falsehood, valid and invalid interpretations, will hold little attraction for most Christians.' (:117) Menzies is impatient of the philosophical ambivalence which demands 'What is truth?'

2. 'Evangelicals believe that the Christian faith is intimately connected to the key redemptive events of salvation history recorded in Scripture..... The meaning and truthfulness of those texts purporting to be historical cannot be divorced from their historicity. It mattered to Paul whether the resurrection actually happened (I Cor 15:12-19). How can it be different for us?' (:117)

3. The shift in the post-modern paradigm from the intent of the authors to readers and their response runs the danger of importing meaning into the text rather than obtaining meaning from it. Menzies understands the post-modern reaction to the sterility of the findings of historical-critical interpretation, but argues that evangelicals have never used the method in such a way (:118) He is insistent that a distinction should be made between the (one) meaning of the text and the (multiple) 'applications or significances it may have for various situations and cultures .... if we are to restrain ourselves from distorting the text' (:118).

4. Assessing Cargal's challenge to mean abandoning an alliance with evangelical methodology which could lead pentecostalism to irrelevance, Menzies asserts that the opposite course would be more relevant. The time has never been better for pentecostals to identify with evangelical scholarship (:119-120). Indeed, he sees a greater danger, that pentecostalism might be attracted to the ahistoricalism of post-modern thought. This is a temptation to which contemporary pentecostalism, with its pragmatic and experiential focus, may be particularly vulnerable (:117) 'Cargal notes that in practice pentecostals have

> never been overly concerned about historical meaning. Thus the move to postmodernism should not be too difficult. My own fear is that Cargal's analysis of pentecostalism and its potential for being significantly influenced by the postmodern paradigm is correct.' (:116) Menzies evidently shares McLean's concern: 'If we lose our hold on the Bible, that infallible rule of our faith, and conduct, we are lost.' (McLean 1984:36).[53]

It would appear that a major feature of the ongoing quest for a viable pentecostal hermeneutic will be partisanship for either evangelical concerns (to the extent that they centre on history) or those of post-modernism (that are historically relative, or lack interest in the historical), in North America at least. South African pentecostalism has been much less influenced by North American evangelicalism, and from this perspective it is disappointing that the debate in leading pentecostal journals has come to centre upon schools of thought that have developed with little or no reference to the realities of many non-American pentecostals' experience or ministry. The strongly opposing views in the North American debate reflect a measure of despair of ever developing or articulating a distinctive pentecostal approach to hermeneutics - perhaps even to theology in general. Cargal appears to believe that pentecostals would only be credibly relevant if they were to attach ourselves to post-modernism; Menzies appears to feel the umbrella of evangelicalism is large enough to encompass pentecostalism.[54]

The concerns of Cargal in his plea to abandon the modernist-fundamentalist debate epitomised in evangelical hermeneutics, and to adopt the categories of post-modernism, require deliberation. Cargal may not be entirely accurate in insisting that the evangelical paradigm restricts the meaning of the text to the intent of the author. This may or may not be true in circles where a positivistic view of history is maintained in the implementation of the historical-critical method. Many pentecostal scholars will probably insist, with evangelicals, that any implication or application of the text in a different historical culture or setting to its origin should not be *contrary* to any obvious intent of the author.[55] Insistence on this principle is not necessarily insistence on a sterile historicism. Cargal's rather unusual interpretation of the descriptor 'positivist' has already been noted above. As Sheppard has noted, pentecostal bible interpretation cannot be simplistically subsumed as 'pre-critical' or 'first naivete', since the

movement did not develop intellectually in the context of the modernist-fundamentalist debate. Such categories may thus be unhelpful and less than adequate when applied to early pentecostalism.

Cargal asserts that to fail to identify with, or communicate within, the dominant paradigm of our contemporary western culture (post-modernism) will render the pentecostal movement irrelevant. This attitude appears to militate against one of the central values of its Anabaptist, Methodist and Holiness heritage. These groups viewed themselves as radical alternatives to the philosophies and values of the secular and religious societies about them. When they have adopted a defensive posture this has led them either into a retiring (and therefore largely irrelevant) sub-culture, or to brash and aggressive assertiveness (as evidenced by many fundamentalists and tele-evangelists). But where they have seriously and soberly confronted the patterns of thinking of their contemporaries, they have often been 'men who have turned the world upside down'. It could be argued that, had Cargal's thesis been adopted by the apostles, the Reformers (radical and classical), the great revivalists such as Wesley and Moody, the Clapham sect, and a score of other 'alternative' groups, Christians might perhaps never have exerted the influence they have on human history.[56]

Pentecostal theology is challenged by the difference between *seeking to understand* the post-modern paradigm, and casting theology in its form for the sake of possible relevance. As shall be argued below, there is every reason to believe that post-modernism, like any other secular culture, can fruitfully be confronted at root level by an alternative philosophy derived from a more literal understanding of the Scriptures themselves. The changing of secular paradigms of understanding and communication challenge Christianity to continually *recontextualise* the gospel and the life-style of discipleship it demands. This is not easily done without falling into the trap of *redefining* it, so that its content is materially changed.[57]

Cargal obviously distanciates himself from the evangelical insistence on the inerrancy of Scripture, which (if not always formulated in such terms) is probably the predominant view of Scripture in pentecostal preaching and teaching. He maintains that where historical criticism has argued that scriptural narrative is not 'historically true', and where pentecostals are forced

to concede this, the post-modern approach allows them to meaningfully interpret the text anyway (Cargal 1994:178). Groups such as the pentecostals and evangelicals who consider themselves part of the direct action of God in history, must simply recognise that they have a major problem if the authoritative record of that activity of God (the Bible) contains historical fiction.[58] The historical narratives apparently purport to be a reliable witness to the activity of God in history. If they are not 'historically true', then they are not just meaningless; they are destructive to our self-understanding. Paul asserts this boldly: either the testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus is 'historically true', or the faith and hope of the Corinthians is in vain. He offers no alternative option (I Cor 15). Neither does he hesitate to use historical method to validate his assertion (vs.3-8).

Perhaps one of the most attractive aspects of post-modernism for the pentecostal is that it appears to make space for an encounter with God. This modernism could not do. It's positivist presuppositions implied that it would be inimical to the entire notion of the categories 'spiritual' and 'supernatural'. However, as Guinness points out, the openness of post-modernism in this regard is based upon a philosophical position which challenges pentecostal theologising:

> It is true that modernism was openly hostile to religion and that postmodernism is much more sympathetic on the surface. But it is naive to ignore the price tag. Postmodern openness allows all religions and beliefs to present and practice their claims. But it demands the relinquishing of any claims to unique, absolute, and transcendent truth. For the Christian the cost is too high.
>
> (Guinness 1994:106-107)

For pentecostals seeking a theological method and hermeneutic which are consistent with their roots and ethos, the price may indeed be high. Post-modernism is not unsympathetic to the idea of spiritual experience. However, it demands that all criteria for evaluating those encounters be abandoned. Post-modernist experience is at heart formless, contentless, category-less.

Johns maintains:

> If it is to be true to itself, Pentecostalism must maintain a radical commitment to the

presence and sovereignty of God. It must further reclaim an apocalyptic vision which fuses it to primitive Christianity as a single eschatological community living in the hope of the Parousia. Pentecostalism must remain a contrast culture, one which lives out the present realities of the kingdom of God as it waits for a final consummation of all things.

Pentecostal scholars need to consider carefully the distinctiveness of their own worldview and its implications for the postmodern era before they buy into the paradigms and models of the emerging worldview. If they do not the resulting marriage may prove far more detrimental to the movement than the fading courtship with evangelicalism. Pentecostal models of ministry must flow out of Pentecostal paradigms of truth.

(Johns 1995:96)

Guinness makes the point that although modernism as *philosophy* is perhaps on the retreat, modernity as a *phenomenon* and fruit of modernism is not, and post-modernism is just one more fruit of modernity. 'Christians who have prematurely declared victory over modernity are in for a cruel disillusionment' (Guinness 1994:106).

Both modernism and post-modernism express values which the church may either appreciate or reject. Guiness' comments are relevant here because his discussion and thesis are cast in the context of the challenge of the new paradigm to the Christian's intellect:

Sometimes we will side with postmodernism against modernism. But we may just as often side with modernism against postmodernism. Like modernism, for example, Christians reject irrationalism. Like modernists, Christians defend truth, freedom, justice, and humanness as serious and universal. Modernism and postmodernism both have their insights, but both are equal dangers and equally inadequate half-truths. For Christians to join in the public flogging of the dying horse of modernism - thereby reinforcing the relativism and irrationalism of postmodernism and the acceleration of modernity itself - is fatuous and ironic.

(Guinness 1994:107)

His conclusion addresses the plea of scholars such as Cargal who fear the pentecostal movement will become irrelevant if it does not communicate itself within the paradigm of post-modernism:

The church cannot become simply another customer centre that offers designer religion and catalogue spirituality to the hoppers and shoppers of the modern world. Followers of Christ are custodians of the faith passed on down the running centuries. Never must

> we allow anyone outside or inside the church to become cannibals who devour the truth and meaning of this priceless heritage of faith.
>
> (Guinness 1994:110)[59]

Any evaluation of the post-modern paradigm in hermeneutics should take note that post-modernism is not a denial of modernism as such, but of the implications of the modernist paradigm in the realm of *meaning* and *purpose*. The conclusions of modernism that are based upon an understanding of the processes of history and nature as a closed nexus of cause and effect, are not challenged in terms of *that* understanding. While abandoning the field of 'hard science' to the modernist paradigm, post-modernism attempts to establish a sense of meaning and worth *despite* the devastating conclusions of modernism. Thus Guinness (1994:105) categorises it as a movement of despair.[60] Post-modernism does not attempt to deny that humanity is a mere accidental product of an impersonal universe - the ultimate and devastating conclusion of modernism.[61] It attempts to establish other means, eventually non-rational, category-less and without any particular standard or norms, by which in an alternative way meaning and purpose can be established for humanity. Thus the 'scientific' methods applied to the natural sciences are denied authority in the interpretation of art, literature and religion.

In seeking to find support for his thesis on the basis of pluralities within the pentecostal movement, Cargal appears to confuse *experience* and *context* when he speaks of the male, female, black, marginalised, etc. experience, and the pentecostal experience of the spirit. If the protagonists of those groups and contexts demand that the *context* of their existence demand a special approach to the understanding of Scripture, this does not appear to be equivalent to the search for a distinctive pentecostal understanding of the Scriptures. The pentecostal experience is not unique as a context identifier in the same way as race, class and gender. While a search for a viable pentecostal hermeneutic must take note of racial, gender and socio-economic pluralities within the movement, this is not equivalent to reducing pentecostal experience to something akin to 'the black experience' or 'the feminine experience'.

Cargal's approval of the post-modern focus upon the *function* of a particular narrative as opposed to its historicity may not be left unchallenged by pentecostalism. This principle may appear innocuous when applied to Pilate's washing of hands. However, if it is (logically)

extended to any and every other narrative and witness in the New Testament- such as the resurrection narrative and witness - could pentecostal exegesis merely note that the resurrection witness fulfils a specific (even critical) function in the texts and witness of the early church? And then maintain that it is irrelevant whether it is historically true or not? Would it be consistent for a pentecostal theologian to apply a text for *effect* (or to discuss its effect within its literary context), while divorcing it from any historical reference?

Ricoeur's own comments are enlightening, on the relationship between 'history-like' narrative and their historicity. In an essay entitled *Freedom in the light of hope* (1980:155-182) Ricoeur expresses appreciation for the insights of Moltmann concerning the eschatological verification of the resurrection as an event, and not the historical. In response to an essay by Mudge (Ricoeur 1980:41-45) he ponders on the resurrection as an event which 'actually happened', as opposed to what we actually have of the narrative, viz the testimony of the early church to it. His resolution appears to be ambivalent - perhaps one should not talk about the world in which the narrative claims to have occurred, but about the world of the text (:44-45). This demonstrates the limit of the post-modern approach - it deals with the text as phenomenon and makes no claims concerning the claims of the text itself as to its own historicity. The text, being literary, has no (or limited) historical referant. As Macquarrie(1978:102) says of Moltmann, Ricoeur is obviously not committed to any 'crudely literal' interpretation of the resurrection event. However, it is precisely what the pentecostal testimony of the resurrection is - a 'crudely literal' assertion that God has raised Jesus from the dead, and that we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to us. It is this literally 'resurrected within history' Christ who is the Jesus of the four-fold pentecostal formula.

There appears to be unlimited scope for *relativising* the meaning of a text when the text is considered as autonomous within its own semiotic system, and the interpreters as autonomous within theirs. This is particularly true when the assertion is made that the two sets of symbols differ vastly. It is interesting how often, when this line of reasoning is applied, the world-view of the Bible authors is contrasted with that of the twentieth century West, usually and primarily on the basis of cosmology. Since we no longer believe in a geocentric or even heliocentric

universe, nor that there is water both above and below the earth (which in such a view is a flat disc), there can be no congruency of world-view and semiotics system between the modern reader and the semiotic system of a text which apparently does perceive reality thus. Those who assert this dichotomy often appear to absolutise it, and no distinction is made between the world-view of those individuals who received the revelation, and that implied in the revelation itself.[62] The world-view of the canonical Scriptures, particularly with respect to its theology, anthropology, soteriology and eschatology may not be in accord with the underlying theses and presuppositions of modernism or post-modernism. This does not prove conclusively that it is dated or irrelevant to the culture of modernity. The task of a Christian community such as pentecostalism, with its 'radical alternative' ethos, if it is to be consistent with itself, is to confront any prevailing world-view with that of the God of Scripture.[63]

3.5 Conclusion - indications for pentecostal hermeneutics from the attempts to adopt non-pentecostal categories for hermeneutics.

The above survey has attempted to describe some the major fields where pentecostals have attempted to utilise the methods of non-pentecostal groups and philosophical schools in terms of hermeneutics. It is argued that none of these attempts is easily accommodated where a pentecostal witness consistent with its own roots and ethos is attempted. It is also evident that numerous pentecostals would prefer to see a distinctive pentecostal hermeneutic and theology formulated. However, it cannot be denied that there are real needs and perceptions within pentecostalism which underlie attempts by pentecostal scholars to address the issues in terms of non-pentecostal scholarship.

The inclination to utilise a dispensationalist-fundamentalist approach to Scriptures may indicate a sincere desire to speak meaningfully about the pentecostal experience in terms of *history*. The socio-political contextual theologies are attractive to concerned pentecostals because they appear to offer the opportunity to address the very visible and disturbing issues of *society*.[64] The attraction of the faith movement lies in the real desire engendered by pentecostal spirituality to know and to speak a '*sure word*', and to take seriously the role of signs and

wonders (and all other supernatural phenomena) in church and Christian life.[65] The attraction of the post-modern hermeneutic may lie in a desire to be *philosophically sophisticated and relevant*, while making philosophical room for the pentecostal notion of an encounter with God (*spiritual experience*). At the same time, post-modernism stresses strongly the world and experience that any reader brings to a text, and serves a timely warning to pentecostals not to absolutise their (or their peer-group's) reading of the text to the exclusion of insights gained by the rest of the pentecostal and wider Christian community.

These concerns are all valid, and cannot be ignored in the search for a viable hermeneutic. Pentecostal scholarship will benefit if it takes note of the various emphases in the approaches mentioned here. But to be pentecostal cannot be considered purely an accident of history or inheritance - it implies a personal sense of calling and commission which is based upon an ongoing encounter with a living and resurrected God, through and in the power of his Spirit. This awareness of continuity with the apostolic community not only *affects* pentecostal theologising, but could be said to *determine* it. It would thus be difficult to approach the task of theology, including the search for a viable pentecostal hermeneutic, in what the secular academic world approves of as a neutral and objective spirit. It is partly this sense of 'otherness' that make the post-modern paradigm attractive to pentecostalism, since it implies that the role of the interpreter and his community is crucial to the search for meaning in a text. However, while the post-modern paradigm insists on recognising equal validity in other encounters with God outside of Christianity, this relativisation is unacceptable to a 'Jesus-centred' pentecostal Christian. The spirit of post-modern culture might deride such particularism as out-moded and irrelevant. However, in a purely Christian context pentecostals would deny that it is particularism. To them the pentecostal experience should be *normal* Christian experience, not particular to a single group within Christianity.[66]

A viable and consistent pentecostal approach to hermeneutics must be realistic about the tension in a Spirit-movement between doctrine and experience (Clark & Lederle 1989:35-42). As long as the fundamentalistic approach is concerned primarily with affirming the fundamental confessions of the protestant church, its major concern will appear to be doctrinal and confessional, rather than experiential. It is often from those circles that the most outright

rejection of the experiential aspects of pentecostalism derives. To borrow uncritically from such circles may involve an unacceptable dilution of pentecostal experiential realities.[67]

A socially pragmatic pentecostalism may find the emphasis upon praxis in the liberationist contextual theologies attractive. This is a manner of doing theology which emphasises *doing* rather than *thinking or theorising*, *effect* rather than *content*. However, if pentecostals understand themselves as *product* of the Word and the Spirit (and not just utilisers), the way in which the Scriptures are applied inductively to a preconceived human social program by the contextual theologians cannot go unchallenged in a pentecostal paradigm.

The use of the Bible in the Word-Faith movement, as long as it remains simplistic and biblicistic, and is based upon the insights of personalities rather than of the community or of scholarly consensus, cannot provide an acceptable model for responsible pentecostal scholarship. However, pentecostal evaluation of the movement itself may need to treat with caution the arguments of non-pentecostal critics, who might be as rejective of pentecostal experience as they are of the cultic aspects of the Faith teachings.[68] The massive popularity of the Faith movement may not lie as much in its sophisticated marketing techniques, as in a very real perception that other Christian groups (including classical pentecostals) have lost much of the delight and dynamic of life in the power of the Spirit.

The incomplete radicalism of the post-modern paradigm is evident in that it does not *really* question the positivism and determinism of modernism at a basic level;[69] it merely offers an illusory escape into an alternative way of deriving meaning, which is ultimately not really meaning but *a* meaning. The post-modern approach therefore does not seriously challenge the reductionism of modernism, which reduces the Bible to merely another (literary) text; humanity to merely another species; the church to merely another sociological phenomenon; faith, theology and experience of God to merely another spirituality. There is no adequate attempt to overcome the tension created by Enlightenment categories between faith and reason, history and the practice of religion. The tyranny of the positivistic approach to history (along with other observed reality) is not seriously challenged.[70] For many pentecostals this challenge to modernism is thus incomplete. Most pentecostals maintain that the movement of God's Spirit

in human history, tied as it is to the proclamation and values of Scripture, is not merely another religious phenomenon, but the experiential making-known of the only Way, Truth and Life: Jesus Christ. This means that the search for a pentecostal hermeneutic must take seriously the absolute claims of Scripture and its God: claims which have led its people and their spiritual forbears to sacrifice everything they are and have to live lives of radical discipleship.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 3

1. I have discussed the 'reactive' nature of pentecostalism's antecedents in detail in Clark & Lederle 1989:7-10; and the nature and tone of criticism of pentecostalism from its beginnings on pp 10-15 of the same work. I ended my contribution to the work as follows: 'Pentecost is exclusive only in this sense, that it does claim that the true essence of Christianity (not just of Pentecost) is that mortal human beings and God get together on God's conditions, with all the experiential implications of that encounter; and in further claiming that to date it does seem as if Pentecostalism is the one branch of Christendom that reveals a willingness to encounter God thus.... The main thrust of Pentecostal kerygma is not Pentecostalism, but God's invitation and promise to us as human beings.' (:108-109). Other contributors to the work also argue that the pentecostal movement is part of the mainstream Christian church eg. Bond 1989:138; Du Plessis 1989:146-147; Lederle 1989:169-170.

2. 'To my friends and teachers in the Pentecostal Movement who taught me to love the Bible; and to my teachers and friends in the Presbyterian Church who taught me to understand it.'

3. The following reasons might be given for this position: (i) There are those who wish to avoid the stigma of being associated by their non-pentecostal peers with some of the emotional and reactionary excesses of the pentecostal movement. (ii) Some have been interested in building bridges between pentecostalism and the other churches, and for this reason have chosen to play down their distinctives. (iii) Some have been impressed by the depth and variety of intellectual, liturgical and professional accomplishment on display outside of the rather narrow intellectual confines of the pentecostal world. (iv) Some have been challenged by the more overt attempts at social and political relevance in the mainline churches; something not readily evidenced in the pentecostal movement. (v) Many have been challenged by the theologising of those churchmen from the non-pentecostal churches who have experienced (in the pentecostal sense) the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (vi) Some appear to be pliable in the face of the pressures of political and theological 'correctness' and consider that the most relevant approach for pentecostal theological method would be to concur with what they perceive to be contemporary theological fashion. (vii) Within some charismatic circles, many leaders and teachers appear to consider the pentecostal denominations, together with their values and practices, to be part of a dead or dying past; they see in the new teachings and movements a fresh wind of the Spirit, and wish to distance themselves from what they perceive to be stagnation in pentecostal circles.

4. The hermeneutical outline presented in Fee 1983 and Fee & Stuart 1993 is primarily evangelical.

5. Until recently the Evangelical Fellowship of South Africa was dominated by evangelical groups (Baptist, Brethren, Nazarenes, Evangelical-Reformed, etc.) However, in 1996 it reconstituted itself as The Evangelical Association of South Africa, incorporating in the process the Concerned Evangelical grouping, and many charismatic and pentecostal denominations. From being white and evangelical, it is now predominantly black and pentecostal/charismatic.

6. Wenger (1979:111-114) gives an overview of the process by which this terminology came about, viz through the journal *The Fundamentals*.

7. Upon this basis Bond (1989:134) assumes approvingly that pentecostals are fundamentalists. From Hollenweger (1977:291-310) the similar assertion is levelled as an accusation.

8. 'Were I to write my own doctrine of Scripture, I would emphasize qualities of potency, effectuality, and sufficiency.' (Spittler 1985:60)

9. While North American pentecostals are increasingly having to take note of the implications for their own theology and church life of the 'Great Coalition' of evangelicals and pentecostals, Kraus views it from the point of view of its implications for evangelicals. His assessment is positive, as he sees the Holiness tradition of the pentecostal movement adding emphases to evangelicalism that are not inherent in its own ethos, particularly radical personal obedience and social consciousness (Kraus 1979b:59-61).

10. Most White pentecostals in South Africa would probably also fit in here, making for tense dialogue with local Black pentecostals, liberal American pentecostal intellectuals, and many European pentecostal groups. This does not mean that the pentecostal ethos does not imply judgment and condemnation of some practices, e g abortion, but it is not always consistent for pentecostals to pursue these values in the context of what is at times an alien ethos.

11. Spittler (1985:60-62) deals with the sensitivity of the issue of biblical 'errors', and argues that it should not be reduced to the level of 'reductionist shibboleths'. A South African pentecostal visiting American evangelical and pentecostal schools is struck by the emphasis placed by conservatives upon the 'inerrancy' issue, since this has never really been debated in South African pentecostalism.

12. The two most influential works on the Holy Spirit gifts in the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa have been Horton (1934) and Möller (1975), both of which stress the complementarity of the human will and persona with the revelation and working of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is upon 'co-workers' and not upon passive recipients.

13. Ruthven (1993) has provided a detailed pentecostal study of the development of the notion among protestants that the supernatural elements of the first century Christian witness are not to be expected in contemporary Christianity - ie. the notion of *cessationism*.

14. In the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA the dispensational approach to eschatology has recently been much debated. Premillennialism has been accepted uncritically for many years as the only valid understanding of the end-times. This has recently been challenged by a number of pentecostal scholars, evoking a significant grass-roots reaction. Reconciling the apocalypticism of a pentecostal group (which biases it toward premillennialism) with dispensationalism (which challenges its view of itself as participant in the ongoing Biblical history of God) is obviously not a simple matter.

15. Anderson-Scott's discussion on the nature of faith and encounter in the *corpus Paulinum* gives a cogent description of this difference in approach and concern (Anderson-Scott 1961:102-108). He insists that the Pauline notion of faith was of a bond that issues in 'faith-union' between the believer and Christ, and cannot be limited to sterile intellectual assent, whether to statements of faith or to historical efficacies.

16. Under the heading *Biblical criticism at the service of Scripture: An example*, Hollenweger(1977:302-307) remonstrates with the simplistic adoption of fundamentalist principles of interpretation by pentecostals. His primary argument is that pentecostals who do so are not concerned to work together in unity of mission; and that they therefore deny the potential impact of their message and ethos.

17. F P Möller's *Die Sakrament in Gedrang* (Johannesburg: Evangelie Uitgewers, 1951) uses the same logic and arguments as Hubmaier's treatise on Christian baptism of believers, 1525. There is no indication that he was aware of Hubmaier's work at the time of writing, which was just a few years after his conversion

from the DRC to the AFM of SA.

18. By 'Anabaptist' he is referring to the Mennonite tradition and its antecedents.

19. Although Sider appears to be addressing Mennonite socio-political activism, his point might well be directed at pentecostal pragmatism, where the demand that 'something be seen to happen' often relativises orthodox Christian doctrine and even practice (Clark & Lederle 1989:41-42); Menzies (1994:117) says: 'Pentecostalism, because of its pragmatic and experiential focus, may be easily attracted to the ahistorical vision inherent in postmodern thought... Postmodernism may allow Christians to speak about such encounters, but not with authority: we are but one voice in a cacophony of unintelligible sounds.' Incorrect theology leads to incorrect practice.

20. I have chosen this descriptor since the more commonly used (in South Africa) title 'liberation theology' does not adequately express the scope of these theologies. In Europe the most common form is 'political theology', in Africa and Latin America it is 'liberation theology', and in North America it is 'Black Theology' (also used, with different emphases, in Africa). The most radical form is the 'theology of revolution', encountered primarily in South America. The chosen descriptor for this study emphasises the two most distinctive elements: socio-political concern, and an attempt to consciously do theology in its social context. The term 'contextual' is used generally for these theologies in South Africa, whereas in wider theological circles it may denote more than the socio-politically concerned theologies (as in missiology, where 'contextualisation' of the gospel is a major concern - cf. D.L. Whiteman, 'Contextualization: The theory, the gap, the challenge', *International Review of Missionary Research* 21/1 (1997), 2-7.) It is thus crucial to note that in this section the term 'contextual theology/ies' refers explicitly and solely to the political and liberation theologies as encountered in South Africa, the consensus in scholarly circles being that the methodology of these theologies includes (to a greater or lesser extent) the utilisation of Marxist categories of thinking (cf Deist, Fierro and Motlhabi below).

21. In South Africa Bosch (1980:28-40) has best summarised two major schools in their confrontation with one another. Concentrating on missions theology, he outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the so-called *evangelical* model and the *ecumenical* model. Since at issue is the nature of the relationship between church and world, and the outreach of the church to the world, his outline is relevant to pentecostal self-understanding. Since Frank Chikane was for some years the General Secretary of a classical ecumenical organisation, the South African Council of Churches, his re-acceptance into the pastorate of a pentecostal church which has maintained a classical 'evangelical' (Bosch includes pentecostals in this term) approach to church and world has interesting implications for the denomination.

22. Lapoorta has published his doctoral thesis (1996), which describes the long pathway to unity in the AFM of SA from the perspective of the black (African, Indian and Coloured) sections of the church.

23. As a White African I take note of the recent work done in this area by Eldin Villafañe (1993), but limit my assessment here to the use of the liberation and political theology paradigms in the Southern African context. The problems of establishing a pentecostal approach to theology and Scripture in a pluralistic context are not simple to solve. It appears easier to implicitly reduce the movement to a white (or at least, Western) middle-class phenomenon, something very evident at the Pentecostal World Conferences. At Oslo in 1992 there was one speaker from Africa, an Afro-American resident in Nairobi. There was no representative from Africa on the advisory committee. Non-North Atlantic contributions were reduced to those from totally Westernised preachers from Asia. The scope of the presentations at the theological stream of Brighton '91 were a welcome corrective, with women's issues, and particular African and Latin American concerns and spirituality being aired (published as Hunter & Hocken 1993).

24. 'No-one today is as naive as still to believe that the Bible is a factual account of events as they took place in Biblical times... As a form of theology, therefore, the Bible reflects on certain historical events of Biblical times and interprets them theologically...' (Motlhabi 1987:10).

25. His work is entitled 'How does a Marxist read the Bible?' and was delivered at a seminar entitled 'Liberation theology and the Bible'. This implies an equation. The relationship between the socio-political theologies and marxism is not always easy to define, and the very term 'marxism' is loaded with emotional content, particularly in South Africa. I have dealt with Moltmann and marxism elsewhere (Clark 1989:21-29). The use of marxist categories in theology and hermeneutics does not necessarily imply total surrender by theology to marxism. Fierro (1977:114), a commentator sympathetic to contextual theologies, notes: 'Many of today's theologians, and almost all those who have concerned themselves with political theology, seem to admit unreservedly the validity of the Marxist analysis insofar as socioeconomic realities are concerned... a general consensus exists: Marxism is valid as a social and economic theory, and theological anthropology can count on it with the same assurance that it counts on the fact of phylogenetic evolution.' He points out that theologians such as Moltmann and Metz quote most regularly in their extra-theological sources from marxists such as Bloch, Adorno, Habermas and Marcuse. He concludes 'that fact is that political theology seems to be operating as if there were no line of reasoning but the Marxist one' (:109). If this is so, it is a distinct limitation for pentecostals, although they in turn need to be sure they do not operate as though there were no other line of reasoning but the capitalist one.

26. The depth of this sentiment is profound, and can not always be identified with 'racist' attitudes on the part of whites, nor with a desire to maintain their own privileges. Poewe-Hexham & Hexham (1993) argue that the portraying of white charismatics and pentecostals in South Africa as 'right-wingers' does not do justice to the diversity of political opinions held by individuals among these groups. When the leaders of the International Fellowship of Christian Churches in South Africa (a grouping of mainly Faith-churches, with some classical pentecostal member groups) led the group into the South African Council of Churches, without consulting the member churches, the Assemblies of God Fellowship churches withdrew from the IFCC, on political grounds. Many of the pastors of this AOG Fellowship are known to be 'liberal' in their politics, but had strong theological objections to being brought into fellowship with the ecumenical movement, and thus with its political activism (Watt 1992:171-185).

27. Most pentecostal pastors in Zambia appear to be positive about Chiluba, both as politician and as Christian. However, some of the more Westernised pastors with larger churches (eg. Mark Masonda of Longacres Apostolic Faith Mission of Zambia, Lusaka) are concerned at the way politicians around Chiluba are trying to win or demand their support for their own particular political programme.

28. There is not always agreement in the way terms such as 'inductive' and 'deductive' are used in theology. The term *inductive* is used in this thesis to describe the process by which the Bible is approached with an already formulated (or even resolved) question or problem. This is in line with the dictionary meaning of the term, and is how Beyerhaus understands it (see next end-note). The opposite process, of *deduction*, is the traditional exegetical approach of the Biblical sciences, in which an attempt is made to deduce what the point of view of the Bible, or part of the Bible (the 'text'), is. The problem in the political theologies is not that the inductive approach is used, but that it is the only approach which is used. Social-analysis is thus done without reference to the Biblical view of societies and their dynamics. This is clear in Kairos Document 1985:13, where the fundamental problem of 'church theology' is defined as the lack of a social-analysis being made before theology is done. Under the heading 'Prophetic theology' (:15-16) it is made explicit that the very first step in theology is to do a social-analysis, before the traditional manner of doing theology is implemented. The Bible is then welcome to *comment on* (:16ff) the situation thus defined by the social-analysis (a simplistic ly perceived oppressor-oppressed situation), but apparently has no part in *determining* what it is.

29. Chikane 1988a:102-105 argues for Christian responsibility to replace the capitalist structures with socialist; Sugden 1982:112: '... when these Christians turn to the Bible for what it has to say, it is not in order to decide whether Marxism is right or wrong, but to apply what the Bible says to the world within the context of a Marxist analysis... Act before you theorise because there is no alternative to siding with the oppressed in their struggle.' Beyerhaus (1987:6-7) sets out the liberation/political theology approach to the Bible as: 1 - Replaces deductive method of using Scripture with the inductive (see previous end-note), by first doing a social analysis; 2- ntilises only one possible social-analysis: the

Marxist; 3 - turns to the Bible, but does so critically, i e critical of the social interests served by the writers of the Bible themselves; 4 - replaces a search for knowledge about God with an emphasis on action, i e *uses* the Bible as opposed to *learns* from it.

30. The *Kairos Document* prompted a certain amount of emulation. Concerned evangelicals brought out the *Evangelical Witness* in 1986 - an attempt to critique themselves rather than the compilers of the *Kairos Document*. A number of pentecostals can be found in the list of signatories, and the document's preface specifically includes the pentecostals and charismatics as 'evangelicals'. However, the tone of the document is as uncritically accepting of Marxist social analysis and solution as the *Kairos Document*, and the main thrust is against the rejection of this reasoning by the more determinedly apolitical evangelical theologians and groups (arbitrarily termed 'right wing').Shortly afterward a document entitled *Relevant Pentecostal Witness* was produced by a small group of South African pentecostal churchmen. The presuppositions and method were largely the same as for the *Evangelical Witness* and *Kairos Document*, and the document received some international attention. However, both the document and the *Azusa* magazine which flowed from it appear to have had a very short-lived effect on South African pentecostalism.

31. Möller (1987) was an attempt to provide a pentecostal perspective upon political developments in South Africa at that time. This work was disseminated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in foreign countries via the network of South African embassies. De Wet (1989:194-215) outlines the relationship between the AFM of SA and the South African state, arguing that since the 2nd World War it had not questioned or opposed Nationalist government thinking or policies; indeed, it had come perilously close to promoting them. He makes specific reference (:208-209) to the discriminatory manner in which he considers pastors indulging in politics were dealt with by the church: G R Wessels, white pro-government and eventually National Party senator, was welcomed in the church, while Chikane, a black anti-government activist, was defrocked. Burger (whose history of the AFM covers only the period 1908-1958) argues that the political debate between the pro-National Party faction and other members, was crucial in the schism of the white church which led to the formation of the Pentecostal Protestant Church (Burger 1990:324-331). However, it would be simplistic to reduce the dynamics at work since the 2nd World War in the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa to political tensions and rivalries. Other influences from outside of South Africa, including a general upward mobility among western populations, and the rise of 'personal' ministries (eg William Branham, whose visit to South Africa in the 1950's had a major impact on local pentecostalism), among others.

32. Ramaphosa became the General Secretary of the African National Congress. Chikane's position with regard to this liberation group has until recently been more ambivalent: Since the 1994 elections in South Africa he has been offered a senior ambassadorship by the governing party (which he declined); he has served as Director General in the office of the Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki; and recently (October 1997) he stood unsuccessfully as a candidate for the chairmanship of the ANC in the Gauteng province. This latter very public event (which, had he won, would have led to his appointment as premier of South Africa's richest province) has now identified him overtly as a member of the ANC party. In December 1997 he was elected to the national executive of the ANC. The Committee for Doctrine , Ethics and Liturgy of the AFM of SA is currently wrestling with the problem of pastors with such overt party-political affiliations, since in the previous white church membership of a political party disbarred one from ordination in the church.

33. Moore (1995:33), referring to the speaking of God in Deuteronomy that came from 'the margin' (the wilderness), claims: 'Without the experience of the voice which comes from the midst of the fire, as it did on the day of Pentecost and as it did at Azusa Street, we may never become critical enough to affirm as we should the other voices from the margins.' Yoder (1985:119-120) maintains that it is fully in line with antecedents such as the Lollards, Wycliffe, Wesley and Finney that the Bible be appropriated to promote socio-political freedoms.

34. Dayton (1987:143ff) points out that although the earlier Methodist and Holiness foundations of the pentecostal movement were more optimistic about the impact of their revivals upon the world and its

structures (postmillennialist), political realities forced a change in this viewpoint, and by the beginning of the 20th century pentecostalism's precedents were primarily premillenialists awaiting an apocalyptic intervention in the world and its structures. Thus pentecostalism has inherited from the 19th century a pessimistic view of human political processes which reinforces the apolitical quietist tendencies inherited from its more radically alternative forbears, the Anabaptists and Montanists. However, this does not preclude the implications of radical discipleship within the world for the processes and structures of the world within which the disciple lives.

35. Michaelson (1979:72), speaking from the Anabaptist perspective, after commenting favourably on those Christians who are committed to social justice, cautions: 'Liberation theology rightly accuses the American church of letting its theology be captured by capitalism. But is the only possible response a theology which runs a risk of being captivated by a Marxist ideology?' I have attempted to deal ith 'twin-edgedness' of the implications of the critical freedom of a radical alternative pentecostal comm' ity elsewhere (Clark 1989:211-213; 217-220; 227-229. Clark 1990:92-94. Cartledge (1996:116 and note 5), discussing the paradigm of empirical theology offered by van der Ven, believes that a conceptual framework that adopts marxist social-analysis as a basis is 'problematic' for pentecostal theology.) As the Anabaptists were a 'third-force' in the politics of the Reformation, pentecostals might well be a 'third-force' in the continuing tensions and debate in the church between Left and Right, liberal and conservative, socialism and capitalism. Moltmann's (1974:7-81) description of the tension between identity and relevance in the church (even if there may not always be agreement on Moltmann's definitions of either), and its resolution in the cross of Christ, may provide a useful model for pentecostals to work toward an understanding of the socio-political challenges confronting the movement.

36. Although this movement has numerous teachers, it has not produced many classically theological works (DeArteaga 1992 being the exception). For this reason its major theological tenets and presuppositions have been outlined analytically more by its critics than by its proponents. This was true of the earlier pentecostal movement, and sources from this era, as for the Faith movement, necessarily are of a populist or eye-witness nature.

37. It may be argued that the militant promotion and wide acceptance of the so-called 'Toronto blessing' in South Africa during 1995 can be attributed in part to the suspect hermeneutical foundation laid during the previous 15 years by influential word-faith teachers in this country. I have presented a critique of this phenomena and its use of the Bible in Clark 1995b.

38. In the mid-eighties I was personally present at sermons preached by Ray McCauley of Rhema in South Africa which a) urged me to find my angel and make him work for me (Heb 1:14), and b) urged me to enjoy prosperity, since I am an ambassador of God (II Cor 5:20), and ambassadors live in the best part of town, travel in the best cars, live in the best houses, etc.

39. In South Africa Trevor Verryn of Unisa produced a critique of the movement (Verryn 1983), and shortly thereafter died of a heart attack. This was proclaimed by some in the movement as God's judgement upon him. I was also mentioned at the time as being under God's wrath because of Clark 1983, which was one of the first pentecostal evaluations of the movement in South Africa.

40. When evaluating (on behalf of the Curatorium of the Apostolic Faith Mission, in November 1996) the content of the courses offered by the Rhema Bible College in South Africa, I was informed by the Dean of that College that they were tied to the teachings and patronage of Hagin, and that if he taught a particular doctrine, so would they. The point under discussion was the 'Jesus died spiritually' teaching of Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland.

41. The primary focus on Gadamer and Ricoeur in this chapter is on the *understanding* of their work revealed in the works cited of such Pentecostal scholars as Cargal, Plüss, Byrd, Israel et al, Harrington & Patten, Sheppard and Menzies. Within the space of this work, and in the light of the scope of secular hermeneutical theory, this appears to be a reasonable limitation. In what sense could Gadamer and Ricoeur be labelled as 'post-modern'? Both concern themselves primarily with the elicitation of meaning,

and Ricoeur primarily from literary texts (although he also considerably expands the meaning of 'text' to include any field of study in the human sciences - 1981:197-221, the essay entitled *The model of the text: Meaningful action considered as a text*.) The question must then be asked: According to these scholars, in what relationship does the sought-after meaning of a text stand with regard to the intent of the author, and the historicity of the events he recounts? How important are these origins for the ultimate meaning of the text to a reader/hearer/proclaimer of our time? The answer to these questions will determine to what extent they embrace the post-modern paradigm. Gadamer's epochal work (1965) centres upon a number of nuclear issues, including epistemological issues as much as hermeneutical. Predominant among these is the rejection of the Enlightenment insistence that the methods of the natural sciences may be transferred summarily to the interpretation of literary texts (1975:39ff; 446-7). 'Meaning' can thus not be understood from the point of view solely of origin and intent - literary works, as well as works of art, develop an autonomy of their own (:73-80), and convey a message which depends as much upon the reader/beholder as upon the author (:142-146). Gadamer makes much of the notion of the 'rules of the game', this concept functioning as a metaphor for the understanding shown by a participator in the interpretation process. An arbitrary subject-object distinction cannot be maintained, and the search for objective meaning in a text is doomed from the start by the subjectivity and historical situation of the interpreter. However, while being sceptical of the importance of *historicism* in the interpretation process, Gadamer does insist on the *historicality* of that process itself. *Tradition* thus plays a vital role in establishing the authority of any given interpretation (:235-274). From this thinking Gadamer developed his well-known metaphor of the 'merging of horizons' - that of the author and his work being merged with that of the interpreter. Meaning is thus found in the event of interpretation, the event of the 'merging' (:340-341;358ff). (Gadamer's rejection of the notion of 'scientific method' in this process leads to Fairlamb (1994:104ff labelling him 'post-modern'. Vattimo (1988:113ff) also considers Gadamer to be a post-modernist who bases his general theory upon Heidegger, but who is not as radical as the implications of Heidegger's nihilism.) Ricoeur would go beyond this. To centre the establishment of what meaning there is to find in the text in an event appears to him somewhat mystical. Anyway, Gadamer's 'horizons' remain essentially historical, and make much of his work merely a starting point (1981:59-62). The separate autonomies of the text and of the reader are only mutually alienating when the question of history is primary. These autonomies should rather be taken into the process, actually utilised in the procedure of interpretation, by a process of 'distanc[illegible]ion' (1981:61; 90ff). The text originated in a system of language and symbols which is alien to the system of language and symbols in which it is interpreted. This is not a problem: it should rather be seen as the background against which the text can be 'creatively' interpreted in the interpreter's own semiotic system. A text may thus have multiple senses, depending on the way it functions within a given semiotic system. The purely historical approach to the Scripture text may at best provide an *explanation* of the text, while an *understanding* could only be obtained by searching for meaningful application in the symbol system of the interpreter (1981:145-164). This can only be validly done where the interpreter is suspicious of his or her own involuntary contribution to the meaning of the text (what is read in to it), and of his or her own ability to draw meaning from it. A meaningful retrieval of the intent of the text is thus only arrived at after critical introspection, but is still recognised to be merely *one* potential interpretation of the text. In *The rule of metaphor* (1978) Ricoeur discusses the difference between 'sense' and 'reference', and on the basis of the work of Frege accepts that 'sense' refers to the semantic meaning of a term, while 'reference' refers to its semiotic function: 'this' = 'that'. He argues further that this is true *except for literary works*. In these cases, 'reference' cannot be seated at word or sentence level, but at the level of the complete work. The work thus contains its own 'world' within which reference is made, but this reference should not be misconstrued as pertaining to a reality outside of the work (Ricoeur 1978:216-228). In so far as Ricoeur (or pentecostals who follow his hermeneutics) considers the Bible to be a literary work, to that extent he obviously denies the text clear historical reference. This is made explicit in his reply to Lewis Mudge, where he states: '... the world displayed by biblical stories and which shatters our ordinary beliefs about the "real" world, is not a historical world, a world of real events, but the world of the text.' (Ricoeur 1980:44). In the light of this it would not be harsh to refer to Ricoeur as 'post-modern'.

42. 'The fashion to deny any objective standards of belief is sometimes called "postmodernism". That is not a particularly useful label. It has many connotations that obscure rather than assist discussion. Like any label it is not worth fighting over. Nevertheless, there are profound and important philosophical issues

that underpin this fashion.' (Luntley 1995:1)

43. Griffin et al (1993) describes the contribution to what Griffin terms 'constructive' post-modern thinking (see next end-note) of the following scholars: Peirce (1839-1914), James (1842-1910), Bergson (1859-1941), Whitehead (1861-1947) and Hartshorne (1897-). Bertens (1995) sketches a process by which the various forms of postmodernism came to notice, from the early fifties (anti-modernism) to the post-modern politics of the early 1990's. Johns (1995:82-83) finds antecedents to what he terms the Systemic Worldview in Hume, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Peirce, James and Dewey.

44. Guinness, an evangelical, provides the following description of the phenomenon: '.... postmodernism announces itself as a break with modernism, just as modernism did earlier with tradition. Where modernism was a manifesto of human self-confidence and self-congratulation, postmodernism is a confession of modesty, if not despair. There is no truth, only truths. There are no principles, only preferences. There is no grand reason, only reasons. There is no privileged civilisation (or culture, belief, norms, and styles), only a multiplicity of cultures, beliefs, periods and styles..... There is no grand narrative of human progress, only countless stories of where people and their cultures are now. There is no simple reality or any grand objectivity of universal, detached knowledge, only a ceaseless representation of everything in terms of everything else.'(Guinness 1994:103-105). Bosch (1991:350-362) describes the characteristics of postmodernism as: expansion of reason to include the nonrational and spiritual dimensions of human personality; moving to a holistic interdependence with nature; rediscovery of teleology and contingency rather than deterministic linear causality and control; acknowledging failure and the challenges of progress; the insight that 'facts' are interpreted facts; lessened optimism in the face of societal problems and the reality of evil; and the interdependence of people - teamwork and communality (as summarised by Lederle 1994:25-26 - Lederle terms Bosch's description a description of *anti*-modern post-modernism, as opposed to the *ultra*-modernist post-modernism of the European deconstructionists). Jameson (1991:xi), from the Marxist perspective, describes post-modern theory as 'the effort to take the temperature of the age without instruments and in a situation in which we are not even sure there is so coherent a thing as an "age" or zeitgeist or "system" or "current situation" any longer.' He goes on in the rest of his work to describe the phenomenon in terms of ideology, video, architecture, literary style, space, theory, economics and film. After a discussion of General Systems Theory leading to an Open Systems Paradigm, Johns (1995:83-84) concludes: '... a systemic worldview has been emerging for some time and will probably become the dominant worldview of the next century. ... the exact nature of the emerging worldview is not yet known. ... Emphasis will be placed on perceiving how systems are structured, how they function, and how they purposefully interface. Systemic thinking will be holistic and pluralistic. The degree to which the systemic worldview will be positivistic is yet to be determined. Reason will no doubt be a primary arbiter of truth.' Griffin (1993a:viii-ix) identifies two forms of post-modernism: the *constructive*, which 'Going beyond the modern world will involve transcending its individualism, anthropocentrism, patriarchy, mechanization, economism, consumerism, nationalism, and militarism.' This form of post-modernism, will not tend back to pre-modern thought forms, but will recognise that the modern world has produced 'unparalleled advances' which should not be rejected through negativism. The second form he identifies as deconstructive post-modernism, which 'does not simply carry the premises of modernity through to their logical conclusions, but criticizes and revises those premises.' It 'involves a synthesis of modern and premodern truths and values.' Raschke (1992:94) notes: 'The term "postmodern" has itself come of late to serve as a kind of clandestine intrusion into the kingdom of signification. The word concomitantly baffles, bedazzles and enrages - principally because it neither denotes nor intimates anything other than an incursion across the borderline of sensibility... Postmodernity amounts to a redescription of logic as 'aesthetics', of message as medium, of communication as dramatics, of truth as embodiment. Postmodernity is the transcendence, or 'overcoming', of all archaic or 'legendary' orders of significance that have underwritten cultural discourse.' Smith (1982:7) sees the post-modern era as the era in which humanity is no longer sure of the controlling presuppositions of modernism: 'First, that reality may be personal is less certain and less important than that it is ordered. Second, man's reason is capable of discerning this order as it manifests itself in the laws of nature. Third, the path to human fulfilment consists primarily in discovering these laws, utilizing them where this is possible and complying with them where it is not.' Waugh (1992) has collected a number of contributions from

scholars who theorise on post-modernism (e g Habermas, who in 1980 considered it an unfulfilled project of modernity) and of post-modernists themselves (e g Lyotard, who Waugh claims re-appropriates Kant's notion of the Sublime as 'a self-consciously postmodern mode in which all striving for correspondence between Real and concept is abandoned' (:115), and Baudrillard, who, according to Waugh, states that 'media messages saturate the cultural field so entirely that the "masses" are reduced, through an overload of information, to an inert and silent majority and all meaning implodes into the black hole of simulcra.' (:115)) Here the impact of post-modernism in, and its relation to, the world of cybernetics is being taken seriously.

45. Du Toit (1997) addresses the notion of the 'end of truth'. Noting that no final criterion for truth exists, he maintains that in Western thought there is nevertheless an unshakeable belief in truth (:940). He argues that post-modernism has denied not the notion of truth itself, but the autonomy of truth: truth is shown in post-modernism to be totally context-dependent, and therefore not an absolute (:940-941). In response to the question, has religious truth come to an end? he responds 'the truth of religions must be seen as contextual, operating within the paramters allowed by tradition and confession, and influenced by historical circumstances. No single religious truth exists - only a multiplicity of truths within the various traditions.' (:943) Similarly, in terms of science he notes that 'we have come to the end of scientific truth in the sense that science gives access to the truth, a truth that is to be accepted universally, and must necessarily influence all other sciences.' (:945) He notes too that Nietzsche, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger all proclaimed the end or completion of metaphysical truth (:945). After agreeing that the correspondence theories of truth are no longer acceptable, and a discussion of the attempts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa to discover the truth behind apartheid violence, he concludes under the heading 'The future of truth': 'We are indeed doomed to search for truth within our contingent historic contexts, where the truth we find according to our language rules and rules of logic and convention allows us to find some consolation. This will be coloured by the knowledge of the provisional nature of our time and place in history where we can do no better than to dimly reflect in a mirror.' (:953) Du Toit is articulating what appears to be *the* post-modern belief: that there *is* an absolute truth, and that is that all truth is subjective. He explicitly denies that there is *no* truth, since such a claim nullifies the claim itself (:953). Luntley (1995) cogently argues against the absolute relativisation of truth. While accepting that the notion of 'objective knowledge' that flowed from the Enlightenment cannot be accepted uncritically, he nevertheless differs from some of the post-modernist assertions that all that remains is epistemological anarchy. He argues that all humans (including post-modernists) accept the notion of 'simple truth' (:110ff), while he insists that there has to be a differentiation made between truth and judgement, since the very notion of 'judgement' implies a norm (truth) which is employed in making the judgement. Truth cannot therefore be reduced to mere judgement (:28ff). Since he accepts the 'self-madeness' of the human self, however, he concludes 'there will, however, be no room for a religious framework that grounds moral values in the divine. The contingently framed self is a self of the here and now, in real history and real culture.' (:224) Luntley's attempt to find a rational and meaningful synthesis of the assertions of both modernism and post-modernism in asking question about reason, truth, self and history could be useful for pentecostals who also ground their values in an experience of God in history - an ongoing history in which they are now incorporated - and 'not in a heaven located just out of our sight.' (:224). Hollinger (1994) maintains that post-modernists are neither fundamentally irrational nor anti-truth: 'Theory is thus important to postmodernists, but the task of theory, and its basic orientation, is not the universal truth of the Enlightenment but specific to the demands of the day. One must be more rigorous and honest than the defenders of the dogmas of the Enlightenment can allow themselves to be; we need to examine our questions and assumptions critically and test their limits.' (:174) Since the language of Hollinger and of the post-modernists he discusses is peppered with imperatives ('need', 'must', etc - see just the short quote above) it is clear that to him post-modernism contains some clear moral imperatives that imply acceptance of absolutes. Perhaps the distinction between the post-modernist and modernist notions of truth could be summed up as: for the modernist truth is 'true' for not only method but also for *content* ('dogmas'), whereas for the post-modernist their are absolutes that make demands in terms of *method* ('rigorous', 'honest', 'questions', 'assumptions', etc in the quote above) and asserts that all content derived by such method is essentially relative. '... the postmodernist is an interpreter, not an Olympian legislator.' (:177) Hollinger notes a strong anti-religious basis in post-modernism: 'Postmodernists, along with a host of other antirealists, explore the ways in

which language, power, social factors, and history shape our views about reality, truth and knowledge. They favor Nietzschean perspectivism, which rejects the the idea of the world in itself, of objective reality, as rooted in our longest lie: the belief in God.' (:177) An important contribution made by Hollinger is his assertion that postmodernists 'believe that everything always has been and will be political. ' (:176) This type of absolutism deserves to be subjected to a more penetrating critique than is normally found in texts dealing with post-modernism, since it postulates a truth that has achieved the status of 'correctness', and is a shibboleth that may be receiving more acceptance than it deserves. Such a critique is emerging in the work of the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics (1996), who are expressing the frustration of literary scholars (in particular) who are concerned at the overwhelmingly prevalent reduction of literary theory to the identification of patterns and interactions of power (racial, colonial, sexual, capital, political, etc) in literary texts. Shusterman (1992) discusses the notion of truth in texts in terms of author's intent, noting with Margolis that truth in interpretation may not be associated with a merely *plausible* interpretation, but that any such interpretation may not be at odds with an admittedly true statement (:70ff). However, he concludes: 'The idea of an essential core of fixed, determinate, descriptive properties which constitute the work of art and are to be represented ... by valid interpretation cannot be successfully maintained; and its untenability undermines theories like Margolis's (and Beardsley's and Hirsch's) which rest on it ...' (:72) The challenge to a hermeneutic which attempts to find the truth in Scripture is to just what extent the Bible can be considered a work of literary art (discussed in the next chapter).

46. In this sense Johns is not in agreement with Schaeffer (1968), whose entire argument is based upon the inevitability of philosophical and cultural development from as far back as Aquinas.

47. Longman tempers his generalisation by noting that scholars who argue that literature is an act of communication between writer and reader may see one of the functions of literature as referential- p 58.

48. In the next chapter it will be argued that for pentecostals, as for evangelicals, the Bible might function both as a propositional text and as a literary, but that the didactic value granted poetic and narrative literary genre within pentecostalism could mean that more weight is granted the former function than the latter.

49. Cargal's use of the descriptor 'positivist' with regard to both modernism and conservative evangelicalism could be disputed- it is precisely in this area that the ways between the two seem to have parted. For instance, the entire thrust of one of the better known evangelical teacher's (Josh McDowell) evangelical apologetic is based upon the rejection of positivism in the philosophy of history (McDowell 1972 & 1975). However, Cargal could be charitably understood to merely be pointing out that both groups believe that 'meaningfulness' is linked indispensably to historicity and reference to 'objective' historical events (although he apparently fails to recognise that they probably define 'history' in radically different ways).

50. It is clear that for Cargal texts have more than one meaning, which in Ricoeurian language means they convey more than one truth. The relativity of both 'meaning' and 'truth' is significant here. Cargal is critical of Israel for still speaking of *the* meaning of a text (:181 - referring to Israel, Albrecht and McNally 1993:143)

51. It might be argued that both Arrington and Cargal may be either less than precise in their terminology, or else are mistaken in their preconceptions concerning traditional pentecostal preaching. Few pentecostal preachers (traditional or otherwise) probably would argue for multiple *meanings* of a text, while most (in my experience) would accept multiple *applications and implications*. The tendency among both pentecostals and evangelicals to allegorize and spiritualise, though perhaps deplorable, is scarcely the equivalent of Ricoeurian distanciation and the establishment of multiple (therefore contextually relative) meanings of the text. Perhaps a greater danger is that pentecostals use the text of the Scripture merely to achieve a particular *effect*, something to which Menzies refers (1994:117): 'Pentecostalism, because of its pragmatic and experiential focus, may be easily attracted to the ahistorical vision inherent in postmodern thought.' I have commented on this focus elsewhere (Clark & Lederle 1989:78): 'A "better"

sermon is one that is more effective in promoting this meeting of God and human being - a less successful sermon is one that is less effective.'

52. The need to find a larger basis for understanding pentecostalism than white middle-class North America is receiving growing recognition in pentecostal theological debate. It is, after all, a prerequisite of doing theology at the end of the twentieth century. However, it is also essential that pentecostals be prepared to admit, as Cargal does, that their own experience does not always allow them to theorise outside of the cultural milieu with which they are personally acquainted. While it is commendable that insights from other geographic areas, cultures and societies be incorporated in the wider understanding of the pentecostal ethos, it is also essential that these contributions be adequately assessed and credibly stated.

53. cf. Clark & Lederle 1989:28: '... an approach to the Scripture that so relativises its normativeness would soon reduce pentecost to the status of a cult, an oddity, a passing freak on the side-show of church history.'

54. On another continent, in which there is a large, growing and vociferous pentecostal movement, from the Southern African perspective there appears to be hope that pentecostals will still be able to define and establish their own categories for hermeneutics and theology. Whether these can be adequately communicated to the non-pentecostal world; whether non-pentecostal scholarship finds them acceptable or not, need not be the primary criteria of their relevance or adequacy.

55. Menzies (1985:5): 'One employs the tools and skills of scientific interpretation to ferret out the meanings and intentions of the biblical writers.... Good exegesis is predicated on these assumptions.' Autry (1993:33): 'The earliest Christians insisted that our faith is based upon events which were witnessed in history... Faith and hermeneutics demand a vital concern for history - the history to which the text refers and out of which it arises.' Arrington (1988:387): '... critical tools must be used to evaluate Scripture. Grammatico-historical-contextual exegesis, redaction criticism, form criticism, and narrative theology provide valuable assistance to the interpreter and should not be neglected by Pentecostals. If they will but keep their awareness of the divine and human elements of Scripture in tension, Pentecostals can effectively use such tools without denigrating the text and sacrificing the historicity of Scripture.' The intention of the author underlies Ervin's (1985:33) 'pneumatic epistemology', since what the Holy Spirit enables the 20th century pentecostal to do is understand in pneumatic continuity with the Biblical authors what they intended. Under the heading *Die gees van die Here verklaar die betekenis van die inhoud van Paulus se briewe* Cronjè (1981:36-37) extends this pneumatic continuity to the very first readers of the epistles, paralleling Ervin and also emphasising the centrality of author's intent.

56. Challenging a generation of evangelical parents of the '60's, who no longer understood their children because of the paradigm shift in education and popular culture to post-modernism, Schaeffer states: 'There are two things we need to grasp firmly as we seek to communicate the gospel today, whether we are speaking to ourselves, to other Christians or to those totally outside. The first is that there are certain unchangeable facts which are true. These have no relationship to the shifting tides. They make the Christian system what it is, and if they are altered, Christianity becomes something else. This must be emphasised because there are evangelical Christians today who, in all sincerity, are concerned with their lack of communication, but in order to bridge the gap they are tending to change what must remain unchangeable. If we do this, we are no longer communicating Christianity, and what we have left is no different from the surrounding consensus. But we cannot present a balanced picture if we stop here. We must realise that we are facing a rapidly changing historical situation, we need to know what is the present ebb and flow of thought-forms. .... we shall need to do a great deal of heart-searching as to how we may speak what is eternal into a changing historical situation.' (Schaeffer 1968:92-93)

57. This is the challenge with which Moltmann (1974:7ff) wrestles, of the tension between *relevance* and *identity* in the church. Choosing the cross as the unchangeable element which dare not be redefined, but which redefines all attempts to understand it, he says: 'When the Christian church represents the religion of a society, it also represents in a symbolic and ritual way the functions tending to integration and homogeneity in this society. But if the Christian life of an individual or of a church is identified with the

crucified Christ, it becomes alienated from this principle of likeness and similarity in society.' (:26) 'Thus the theology of the cross must begin with contradiction and cannot be built upon premature correspondences.' (:28)

58. Obviously the allegories and parables of the New Testament, and the allegories and poetics of the Writings and Prophets were understood as sacred fiction, and this assertion does not hold with regard to them. In terms of understanding the Old Testament, however, there is not always consensus as to just which texts can be subsumed under such headings. Jonah, Hosea and Daniel are examples, with the faculty of the AFM Theological College in Johannesburg unable to achieve consensus (during informal tea-time discussions) on their standing.

59. Jameson 1991:x) maintains that post-modernism and consumerism are logical derivatives of one another: 'So, in postmodern culture, "culture" has become a product in its own right; the market has become a substitute for itself and fully as much a commodity as any of the items it includes within itself... Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process.'

60. Schaeffer (1968:42-45) describes the search for meaning as having crossed a 'line of despair' - despair that humanity can escape from the prison of meaninglessness to which the findings of modernism has consigned it.

61. In discussing the pressure post-modernism places upon modernist categories of scientific explanation, Smith notes: 'As *description* - the fossil record, which is to say the age and the continuities/discontinuities in life-forms that that record discloses - evolution is true and the Creationists mistaken. But as *explanation*, neo-Darwinism is a failure, and one that has serious psychological repercussions.' (Smith 1982:170).

62. This is Deist's method: the discontinuity between the 'primitive' or 'legendary' world-view of the Bible writers and their post-Enlightenment readers is so total that attempts to establish any continuity are not only in vain, but are actually 'disobedient' and 'unbelieving' (Deist 1978:8-10). Deist makes no attempt to discern a world-view in the text that may perhaps exist behind the 'primitive' categories of the writers who attempt to express it, i e he knows of no revelatory character of the writings. This becomes clear in another of his contributions, where he reduces the 'meaning' of the Scriptures to complete relativity to the reigning philosophy of the day (Deist 1979:57ff).

63. I share with Menzies experience of ministry in a cross-cultural situation (in my case between my native English culture and the Afrikaners I teach daily in South Africa, and also between my European background and the cultures of the indigenous peoples I have taught in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia and the Indian Ocean islands). This has often meant propagating the gospel and teaching Christian discipleship in the context of dominant Hindu, Muslim, Bhuddist, animist or Marxist cultures. And it is in precisely this environment that one learns to be sensitive to the pitfalls of relativism, and to value the highly relevant and communicable constants of Scripture. It is interesting that pentecostal converts from Hinduism, for instance, reject, almost to a person, what they see as syncretism in some of the more lurid 'charismatic' phenomena such as the so-called 'Toronto blessing' (ecstatic and hysterical laughter, often accompanied by involuntary physical contortions or movements). They have not interpreted Scripture from their autonomous position in their own semiotic system (in which such manifestations are commonplace, as in Krishna-veneration), but have allowed their system to be corrected by submitting it to the constants of the scriptural faith. A post-modern approach to the Scriptures could not have promoted this.

64. Pentecostal scholars often operate in a context in which very real inequalities, injustices and hardships abound. The presuppositions and methods of the contextual theologies offer what appears lacking in a quietist and 'apolitical' church, a hermeneutical key to understanding the source and resolution of these realities. This has been true in the racial and economic divisions in South Africa under *apartheid*, and in the economic hardships of the Latin American squatter camps, in particular.

65. The pentecostal community shares the mission-oriented spirituality of the Anabaptists, Methodists, Holiness believers and revivalists: it is a *kerygmatic* community, where emphasis is strongly upon making the word known to sinners, in a firm and positive manner.

66. 'Pentecost is exclusive only in this sense, that it does claim that the true essence of Christianity itself (not just of Pentecost) is that mortal human beings and God get together on God's conditions, with all the experiential implications of that encounter.' (Clark & Lederle 1989:108-109)

67. 'A strict adherence to traditional evangelical/fundamentalist hermeneutic principles leads to a position which ... suggests the distinctives of the twentieth century Pentecostal movements are perhaps nice, but not necessary... In its most negative forms, it leads to total rejection of pentecostal phenomena.' (McLean 1984:37)

68. e g Verryn 1983.

69. This is true of both types of post-modernism described by Lederle (1994), the anti-rational and the ultra-rational; also of the two types identified by Griffin (1993a), the constructive post-modern approach and the deconstructive post-modern approach.

70. The discussion concerning post-modernism and the use of its paradigm in Biblical interpretation has recently been highlighted in non-pentecostal South African deliberations on hermeneutics. Spangenberg (1994) reflects on the differences which had arisen in one theological faculty between a New Testament theologian (Botha) and a dogmatician (König) concerning the use and meaning of Scripture. He concludes that the latter utilises a Reformation Biblical Sciences paradigm, and therefore concludes that the Bible communicates objective truths; the former uses a historical-critical paradigm (which actually turns out to be a literary theory which is more at home in post-modern categories) and thus derives subjective 'truths' from the same Scripture. Kourie (1995) reflects on the multidisciplinary approach to the New Testament which is developing in the post-modern era, noting that there is no turning back. She concludes that Biblical scholarship may, because of this, ultimately benefit from a multi-cultural multi-religious approach to the text. In the context of the death of apartheid theology, and the current lack of interest in the socio-critical theologies, Deist (1995) concludes that the multi-facetted and inclusive approach of the post-modern paradigm is the paradigm shift that South African theology requires to deal with the new order in this country. This means (among other things) that the input into theology would no longer be purely Christian but would also include other religions.

CHAPTER 4

PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTICS AND CONTEMPORARY LITERARY THEORY

Two realities influence a search for a viable pentecostal hermeneutic: *firstly*, the fact that pentecostalism takes seriously the notion of encounter with the power of God in Jesus Christ,[1] and with it the world of spirituality; and *secondly*, the valid (thus inescapable) demands and concerns of a scientific approach, which takes the world of the intellect, and of consistently applied logic and rationality, seriously. While part of pentecostalism's contribution to scientific research is that the spiritual aspects of human existence and Christian testimony are taken seriously, it does not posit a hyper-spirituality which ignores human rationality. Along with the rest of the human persona, the intellect is understood to be a gift of God.[2] While pentecostals seek to take God-as-He-is seriously, they must reckon with human-beings-as-they-are equally seriously. That means that rationality, history, society and culture (especially its prevailing philosophy) will have to be taken seriously. This is of course true for all Pentecostal theologising, but is particularly true when epistemology (and therefore knowledge itself) is an issue.

The philosophical and spiritual environment in which the issues of understanding are being raised is changing considerably. Cargal's (1993:187) and others' assertion that the Western world is adopting the post-modern paradigm in its popular and intellectual culture is probably accurate. A manifestation of this acceptance is evident in the search for 'spirituality' in Western society. The aggressive marketing of so-called 'New Age' spirituality by the popular media has led to a situation where modernist scepticism is no longer broadly encountered. Eastern religious techniques such as transcendental meditation (which in some form or other is central to virtually the entire spectrum of Hindu and Bhuddist spirituality) are practised today by millions of Westerners, yoga and acupuncture are common alternatives to Western medical techniques, and belief in the principles of *karma* and *tao*, and in the transmigration of souls, is widespread.[3] Much of this was originally packaged as 'scientific, not religious',[4] but is today being marketed as naked spirituality. A corresponding return to spiritual roots is evident

in the Third World, where shamanism is enjoying a resurgence (and is also being marketed in the West under the New Age banner), and the major religions such as Hinduism, Bhuddism and Islam are enjoying popular acclaim and growth.[5]

In the world of Christianity it is the pentecostal/charismatic movement which best represents (although it pre-dates) this popular divergence from the scepticism of modernism. It is perhaps the most dynamic arm of Christianity, evident in both the charismatic 'renewal' elements in the historical denominations and in specifically pentecostal or charismatic denominations themselves. The movement also features strongly in international missions, while at the same time massive indigenous revivals of Christianity such as those in mainland China, Africa and much of Latin America are often primarily pentecostal/charismatic in their experience and orientation.

The pentecostal movement is thus well-situated in the world of Christian academic pursuits to bring the challenge of this renewed interest in spirituality to the hermeneutical debate.[6] Post-modernism (as mentioned in the previous chapter) must not be understood as a *rejection* of modernism, but rather as an application of its implications in the realms of *meaning* and *meaningfulness*. However, the door it has opened for spirituality has permitted spiritual systems to aggressively market themselves as absolutes. Western post-modern despair of finding meaning for life has thus been a facilitator in the resurgence of spiritual systems which are in effect post-post-modern, or more likely, pre-modern.[7] In Christianity it is pentecostalism which appears to be best equipped to bring biblical thinking and insights to this world of spirituality, without losing its biblical and Christian distinctives in the process. This combination of spirituality with biblical content has enabled pentecostalism to facilitate the modernisation of members of some pre-modern cultures, as recorded by anthropologists in some Caribbean and Central American states (Wedenoja 1980:42-43; La Ruffa 1980:60; Manning 1980:181-82). The biblical content of pentecostalism (based on its literal understanding of the text) can prevent its spirituality from degenerating into superstition or occultism, while its spirituality has the potential to prevent its theology from degenerating into just one more dogmatic or confessional system.

The combination of serious biblical interest and dynamic spirituality, as it is encountered in the broad pentecostal movement, is the basis upon which the contributions of secular hermeneutical philosophy or literary theories will be evaluated in this chapter. A pentecostal approach to hermeneutics does not identify with the scepticism of the modernist consensus with regard to the ability of God to intervene in human history or physical reality (positivism). This dissent is not based upon mere confession of supernaturalism but upon common experience of God, according to the pattern of the biblical witness, on an ongoing basis. Neither does it identify with the despair of post-modernism which finds expression in the relativisation of all spiritual truth into 'truths'. This dissent is based upon its commitment to the biblical revelation of God as the One God, based upon personal encounter with that God. It does not identify with the superstition and fear of the resurgent spiritualities of the East or of shamanism, since its own vital spiritual experience is of deliverance from such evil systems of powers.[8] The relevance of this deliverance is evident in the massive growth of pentecostal Christianity in precisely those societies in which these systems have predominated (Africa and Asia in particular).

This chapter attempts to bring some of the distinctives of such a pentecostal ethos to the question of pentecostal understanding and use of the Bible as a literary theory. The following discussion on pentecostal hermeneutics as literary theory should, however, be understood as something of an *excursus*. The detailed views of pentecostal scholars with regard to hermeneutics will be presented and discussed more fully in the next chapter. For this reason many issues are dealt with here in a rather cursory manner. In this chapter emphasis is upon an attempt to systematise pentecostal notions of Scripture in terms of the *foci* of contemporary literary theory, or at least to consider the implications of those *foci* for pentecostal hermeneutics. The next chapter returns to the specifically theological methodology of this thesis, and attempts to deal with similar data as elements of a hermeneutic which might be termed 'pentecostal'. This chapter therefore does not attempt to be as inclusive of all pentecostal insights as possible, since many of these are dealt with more explicitly in the next chapter. The following discussion should thus be understood primarily as just one pentecostal contribution to the conversation between pentecostal hermeneutics and literary theory. The pentecostal position posited here anticipates in some respects much of the detail with regard

to a pentecostal hermeneutic provided in the following chapter.

4.1 Pentecostal hermeneutics as a literary theory

Jefferson & Robey (1986:13-17) identify five foci of interest in contemporary literary theory, expressed in terms of the following five questions addressed to each specific theory:

i) how does it define the *literary qualities* of the literary text?
ii) what relation does it propose between text and *author*?
iii) what role does it ascribe to the *reader*?
iv) how does it view the relationship between the text and *reality*?
v) what status does it assign to *language* (the medium of the text)?[9]

A credible pentecostal hermeneutic will also take note of these questions, and be prepared with answers which are consistent with its pentecostal ethos. However, in an approach to the New Testament the scope of the 'literature' under consideration is not merely limited (the text of the New Testament) but is also central to an entire discipline known as *Christian theology*. For this reason there is a strong argument for a specific branch of literary theory known as biblical hermeneutics, as opposed to a general literary theory applicable to all texts (Harrington & Patten 1994:114; Sheppard 1994:130; Johns 1995:90). On the other hand, the text of the New Testament (and the history it outlines) may not be so distinctively treated as to bear no relationship whatsoever to 'secular' epistemology, hermeneutics, history and existential experience. A duality between a world of 'biblical reality' and the world of 'real reality' should not be allowed to intrude into the interpretation by pentecostals of New Testament texts today.[10] The dialectical approach of neo-orthodoxy and its successors is thus not a simple alternative for pentecostals, who seem to prefer a more classically logical approach to what the text means and does not mean, includes and excludes. With all due acknowledgement to the existence of literary genre in the Bible, many pentecostals find it difficult to think of historical narrative as history-*like* narrative.

It may appear that the pentecostal biblical theologian would have it both ways: special consideration for the text of the Bible, as well as insistence on general application of its interpretation. However, this desire is urged upon pentecostals by the nature of the material with which they have to do: the text of the New Testament is so obviously unlike any other text with which they come in contact, and the effect of their interpretation implies such a general application, that this assertion is difficult to avoid. Bearing in mind this essential aspect of the descriptive emphasis of the task of formulating a pentecostal hermeneutic, the response to the questions listed above might take the following into consideration:

4.1.1 The New Testament as 'text' and 'literature'

The New Testament presents itself as three main literary genre: narrative, epistolary material, and apocalypse.[11] Within these major elements one also encounters poetry, parable, and allegory. The New Testament is approached with a due consideration for the reality of these literary genre within its pages. The pentecostal approach to this collection of writings could be said to have revealed the following emphases:

i) New Testament narrative is treated as *history*. Across the broad spectrum of pentecostal groups it is considered to be *accurate*, and to be understood *literally* (e g Archer 1996:65-66). Parable and allegory are (in the main) distinguished for what they are, and thus interpreted as didactic material. This literal approach does at times lead to biblicism, while an obvious inconsistency often encountered in pentecostal preaching is allegorization of historical narrative.

The literal understanding of biblical narrative implies a certain amount of sympathy with the concerns of fundamentalism, although the historical background of pentecostalism implies significant divergences from the underlying *propria* of many fundamentalists, as discussed in the previous chapter. One major difference is that pentecostals identify with and appropriate narrative as providing models for correct practice, behaviour, and experience

of God, ie. a didactic *function* for the narrative *genre*; fundamentalists often appear to treat their historicity as valid for a more remote and less direct purpose: to establish or affirm correct conceptuality and beliefs.

This literal and historical understanding of the New Testament narrative in pentecostalism is in line with the role played by this genre among the Anabaptists and other pentecostal antecedents. It is central to any primitivist Christian movement: as long as there is a desire to return to the 'purity', dynamic and ethos of the first century movement, or to live a life of true discipleship, the narratives of the New Testament will be interpreted literally and didactically. The importance of this notion for a theological hermeneutic for pentecostalism will be expanded upon in the following chapter.

ii) The epistolary portions of the New Testament are considered to be *authoritative*, and to state and teach propositions which are *true*. One of the challenges to pentecostal scholarship has been to interpret this authority in a meaningful way, and not simplistically or in a biblicist manner (e g head-covering for women participating in services, or snake-handling). However, the teaching and instruction is understood to have emerged from a real historical and existential situation which has significant parallels with the historical and existential situation of twentieth century pentecostals.[12] The ultimate authority of the teaching is founded in its nature as *revelation*, although pentecostal spirituality understands revelation as implying both divine and human contributions.[13]

One reason why this notion of an authoritative instructional and catechetic canon is essential to a movement such as pentecostalism, is because it (pentecostalism) implies interaction with the world of spirit. Entrance into this 'unseen' realm can only be attempted within clear guidelines, with very explicit norms. Pilgrims in the realm of the working of Spirit and spirits are in a dangerous and confusing situation if they have no clear orientation in the

divinely-given rules of spirituality.[14] While pentecostals do not consider themselves to be wizards, sorcerers or occultists, they are aware of how real and powerful spiritual forces are. Many would agree with Klauck's analysis, that Luke in his narrative goes out of his way to show that the Christian understanding and use of spiritual power is radically different in its application and effect to that of the apostles' contemporaries who dabbled in occultism (Klauck 1994:100-101). Pentecostals who understand their world to be equivalent in its spiritual dynamics to that of the narrative, need authoritative guidelines for dealing with it.

Another reason why pentecostals emphasise the authority of the epistolary portions of Scripture is because, while narrative provides clear role-models and descriptions of the dynamic of discipleship, detailed instruction in the implications of the choice for discipleship is still necessary. While the *nature* and elements of pentecostal commitment and experience are made clear by the narrative, the *responsibilities and values* are made explicit in the epistles.[15]

iii) As far as the apocalyptic forms of the New Testament are concerned, the interpretation of these no longer always operates in the clear-cut futuristic axiom of the earlier years of the movement. That pentecostalism was at its beginnings an apocalyptic movement is undoubted (Mills 1976:97-98, 105-109), as the emphasis on Jesus the Coming King in the earliest pentecostal formula bears witness. The basic rule was 'interpret literally as far as possible, understand the rest as symbols'.[16] However, in South Africa a significant debate has emerged after the past (extremely influential) President of the Apostolic Faith Mission, F P Möller (snr.) proposed a spiritualised reading of the book of Revelation in his recently published dogmatics (Möller 1994:469-502). Möller propounds an amillennial approach to eschatology, very similar to that maintained by the Afrikaans Reformed churches in South Africa.[17] Sheppard has also argued that the accepted post-World War 2 approach to eschatology in pentecostalism is based upon fundamentalist and dispensationalist presuppositions, and that this

> does not coincide with the earliest pentecostal understanding of apocalyptic (Sheppard 1984:5). It would probably be consistent with the pentecostal ethos that the futuristic intent of the apocalyptic works be maintained, so that they consequently maintain their full import and impact as *promise*. This was certainly true for the Anabaptists and Montanists.[18]

If the above is a fair reflection of the historical pentecostal approach to the text of the New Testament, then it is clear that it functions primarily as a *handbook*, a manual both for living (discipleship) and for thinking (doctrine). If the text is interpreted literally, understood to be accurate and authoritative, then it cannot be treated as though it were primarily or merely a 'literary' work, with little clear reference to objective historical realities.[19] The notions both of *history* and of *rationality* must be taken seriously in its interpretation, if it cannot be understood as being historically non-referential. This understanding does not deprive the Bible of literary value, as the literary quality of many of the New Testament texts is obvious. However, this is peripheral,[20] and the text is approached and understood primarily as *utilitarian* in intent. It is understood as a *tool*, divine in origin and application, for directing human thinking and behaviour. It is seen as *testimony*, *instruction* and *promise* - and is acted upon as though the testimony were accurate, the instruction clear, and the promise trustworthy. It is seen as a *facilitator*, by which the encounter between God and humanity is mediated, and which makes plain how the divine commission is to be fulfilled.[21]

The New Testament is also considered a product of *history*, of significant events. It arose from and out of the experience of the first churches. This experience was experience of God, of humanity, and of society. It was permeated with charismatic elements. The text of the New Testament thus has an occasional character, having been called forth by perceived needs of, and events in, the earliest communities. This confirms its utilitarian nature. It is not primarily a work of speculative or systematising dogmatics. It therefore needs to be understood (interpreted) in a similar environment and milieu. It presupposes the ongoing activity of God, and offers authoritative norms for conduct and thought in the context of such activity. This means it is considered to be the ultimate manual of discipleship, to be approached in the context of conscious discipleship.[22] This discipleship was in the context of a community, and

thus the role of the community and its history is relevant to the understanding of the text itself. Although the New Testament text arose at the hand of numerous authors in various situations, the continuity of experience and understanding of God between the various far-flung Christian communities of the day means that the New Testament can nevertheless credibly be approached holistically.

4.1.2 The text and the author

Hirsch points out that the most maligned element in the interpretation of texts since the First World War has been the author and his intent. Under the heading *Banishment of the Author* he laments: 'It is a task for the historian of culture to explain why there has been in the past four decades a heavy and largely victorious assault on the sensible belief that a text means what its author meant.' (Hirsch 1967:1). He proceeds to show that this scepticism, which originated in the study of literary texts (e g poetry) soon spread to the interpretation of most genre of texts. It has been maintained under the following rarely questioned assumptions: that the meaning of the text changes, even for the author; that it does not matter what an author means, only what his text says; that the author's meaning is inaccessible anyway; and that the author often does not know what he means (Hirsh 1967:6-23). In an appendix he takes issue with such an authority as Gadamer for extending the notion that interpretation of a text must not take only the history of the text into account but also the historicity of the interpreter (which is an axiom in late modern hermeneutics anyway), into the notion that the intent of the author is somehow irretrievable as an objective truth by means of 'scientific' method (Hirsch 1967:245-267). Hirsch is obviously an apologete for the historical-critical method in interpretation, but he also offers an alternative in an hermeneutical environment where not only is there a prevalent despair concerning the ability of a reader to establish the author's meaning, but where this despair is understood as merit. Pentecostal research in this area might take note of a work such as Hirsch's since one of the challenges faced by the movement is that its Scripture interpretation could descend into a 'Babel of interpretations' (Hirsch 1967:129). Hirsch's argument that there is such a thing as a *valid* interpretation implies a corollary that there are also *invalid* interpretations, and that it makes sense to distinguish between the two.[23]

The pentecostal assertion that the New Testament text is authoritative for all aspects of Christian existence requires that its authority be based upon something in the text (or referenced by the text) itself. It is obvious that the earliest communities granted authority to the apostolic witness because the apostles had themselves been 'with the Lord'. The authority of the text was thus a derivative of the authority of those who had 'seen and heard' (e g Lk 1:1-4 and 1 Jn 1:1-3). And their authority was based upon the fact that they had received it from the Lord himself. There is thus a correspondence of the intent of both the divine author and the human when the authority of the text is evaluated. Since response to the message of the text had (and has) radical implications for ordering one's lifestyle (and could in many ages bring the sentence of death upon oneself) it was crucial that the original intent of the author be discerned before the text was implemented.[24] This was the issue that originally stood behind the need to form a Christian canon, although the issue of correct conceptuality appears to have gradually come to replace that of correct living. The great Christological and Trinitarian debates of the post-Constantinian church clearly represent this tendency.[25]

When a text is granted such authority, and is understood to have arisen in the context of the ongoing activity of God, then the question as to whether the intention of the author is relevant to a present-day understanding of the text may be a moot point. Could it be otherwise? Obviously this raises many questions for the hermeneute. Can the intent of the author ever be credibly ascertained across the gap of millennia? Can the intent of the author be derived without an understanding of the nature of the author themselves (the so-called psychologising approach?) Does the text not contain in itself an incipient transcendence of the author's intent, so that it may be claimed that the author has actually said and achieved far more (maybe something totally different?) than they originally intended?[26] (Is this not perhaps implicit in the very notion of the Biblical concept 'revelation'?) What about the limitations of the human author, in terms of experience, understanding, intellectual and literary ability, etc.?

While it is obvious that the thrust of these questions cannot be deflected by means of facile or simplistic answers, neither can it be denied that the intent of the human author cannot be irrelevant to a pentecostal understanding of the intent of Scripture. However, the pentecostal exegete must take cognisance that attempts to establish that intent are not such a simple exercise

as might first have been supposed. The real purpose of approaching the text is to ascertain the intent of the divine Author, which is not understood as standing in some sort of mystical and logical discontinuity with that of the human writer.[27] On the other hand, this does not exclude wider questions such as 'how does this text function within the wider text?'. Since the intent of the author is obviously directly related to what the author hopes to achieve (the purpose of the text), and each pericope then contributes to this function, the author's chosen wording and structure is never irrelevant to the purpose of the whole. Studies in rhetoric, intertextuality and structuralism are therefore intriguing to a pentecostal scholar in so far as they are relevant to determining the authors' method and sources in achieving their purpose.[28] However, once arriving at what may appear a satisfying explanation of what the authors intended in their own day, the exegete does not remain there, but proceeds to achieve an understanding of the implications of that intent for the present-day situation. This in turn may lead to a demonstration and implementation of that intent. Whether this, in the pentecostal context, would be the same as what Jeanrond terms 'assessment' and Ricoeur 'appropriation' (e g as assumed by Gräbe 1993:6-7), is open to debate.[29]

A pentecostal approach to the text of the New Testament is therefore crucially linked to the historical background and context of each book, of each author, of each writing situation. In a movement which takes its participation in the history of God seriously, this can not be avoided (cf Land 1993:71-94). However, the historicality of the writing process (and the writer) and of the reading process (and the reader) can also not be ignored.

The difficulty which has perhaps been most consistently emphasised in the modern era is that of 'understanding' a text which originated in an ancient world-view. The massive paradigm shifts of the Renaissance and Enlightenment have introduced ways of thinking in modern people which appear to be vastly different to those of their more 'primitive' forebears in the Graeco-Roman world. The historical sciences, and archaeology in particular, have done much to inform the modern mind on the conditions and mind-sets of the remote past. One contribution of value is the questioning of whether the mindset of the Greek and Roman world should in any way be perceived as 'primitive', although it is clear that the social constructs of the day cannot be simplistically equated with what Westerners experience now. However, to

many literary theorists it appears that it would be incautious to believe that a modern person could 'understand' what was intended by an author from such a different paradigm. The world-view of modernity (and of its successor, post-modernity) has little in common with that of the world of the New Testament, and they assure literalistic readers that pitfalls in abundance lie in wait for the unwary who seek to identify with the writers of that time.

This argument is forcefully felt by the Pentecostal community, whose ideal has always been to identify as closely as possible with the Spirit and ethos of the first-century church. Understanding itself to be the product of the Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit of God, it seeks to identify with the essential kernel in the Former Rain experience of Acts. Modern historicism appears to deny them this, or at least to seriously question the validity of their conclusions when they do.[30] The presupposition that the gap is so large as to often be unbridgeable, or that it is irrelevant even to attempt to bridge it, appears to remain unquestioned by many present-day theologians, e g Botha expresses a common assumption in South African theological faculties with regard to New Testament narrative: 'This is, of course, not to deny any contemporary value to Luke's stories and his way of telling them. It is to deny the claim that there *must* be some relevance; we may or may not find something for our times' (Botha 1995:161).[31]

While appreciating the risks inherent in understanding across the gap of time, the Pentecostal idea that the Bible is a witness to the ongoing relationship between God and the human species argues that there is a large measure of constancy between the issues of *then* and of *now*. Although human notions of the physical universe may have become increasingly informed over the millennia, the basic role players in the biblical drama have changed little, or not at all. The ultra-materialist position that spiritual entities do not exist, although still clung to in certain 'scientific' circles, continues to lose credibility as a wave of New Age and pagan occultism sweeps the western world. Neither this wave, nor the burgeoning pentecostal/charismatic movement, can be adequately described as or reduced to mere post-modernist experientialism, although post-modern disillusionment with modernist materialism may well have aided its development. Pentecostals will argue for a cogent relevance of the Scriptures in the world of modernity, since nothing has changed as far as the roles of a gracious God and of a sinful

humanity are concerned. The forms human rebellion against God might take could be relative to the age; the forms God's love, and his power to save, always do take have not changed since Calvary and Pentecost. Since human language is based on a rationality common to the entire species over all ages, the description in human language of the ongoing drama between God and his rebellious creation can probably be reasonably accurately communicated from one age to the next. Pentecostals do not find it difficult to walk in a world of angels and demons, of revivified corpses and cleansed lepers, and yet be 'lap-top'-toting citizens of the twentieth century. Nor do these beliefs and practices imply a return to the knowledge-stifling superstition of the Dark Ages.

It must be admitted that some of the more gross examples of biblicism encountered in pentecostal and evangelical circles often occur because of ignorance of the difference between social customs and terminology as they were *then* and as they are *now*. The practice of men greeting men with a kiss (once common in South African pentecostalism), and an earlier insistence that women always wear hats to church (dealt with by Spittler 1985), are examples. (Snake-handling is not just an issue of ignoring historical context, but also of misinterpretation of the context of commission - leading to an expression of presumption rather than of faith.[32]) However, this does not necessarily mean that the temporal and philosophical gap is insuperable; it does mean that the historical and social context of a pericope must be taken as seriously as the literary.

4.1.3 Text and reader

Perhaps the most significant tendency in late twentieth century hermeneutical theory is the transference of emphasis from the authors and their intent (the historical and objective, or 'scientific' interests) to the role of the reader (the subjective interest). This is no doubt related to the influence of (among others) two of the great fathers of twentieth century thought, Freud and Marx.[33] The psycho-analytical 'findings' of Freud have led twentieth century humans to question whether any understanding achieved by individuals can be divorced from their own

psychological perceptions and needs. The Freudian contribution has led to deep suspicion of claims to objectivity by reader or writer, since Freud so clearly outlined the massive potential for self-deceit in each human subject. The contribution of Marx has been to show the crucial role played by the (political and social) ideological assumptions that underlie any reading of a text or situation. This has led to the pragmatic marxist approach that states that, as these assumptions cannot be avoided, they should be seen for what they are, and eventually utilised (since the aim is not to understand the world, bu' o change it). Although the world-views both of Freud and Marx will not be acceptable everywhere, and have often been significantly modified by many of their disciples, their negative conclusions with regard to the possible objectivity of the human reader will probably continue for some time to be devastatingly applied to any claims to an 'objective' reading of the text.

On the one hand this is a severe challenge to a reading such as the pentecostal, where history and author's intent are taken seriously. On the other, pentecostals are among the 'alternative' Christian groups who may benefit to some extent from such conclusions, since it has been a strong pentecostal argument that participation in pentecostal experience is a prerequisite for understanding the Scriptures meaningfully (McDonald 1976:65; Gräbe 1993:3-4). Pentecostals may claim that they bring with them to the text a 'pre-understanding' that corresponds significantly to that of the originating community and author. This is the aspect which links them most closely to other figures in the history of interpretation of the New Testament, such as Tertullian and the Anabaptists. Reading and reception theories thus offer a useful tool to pentecostals, since they highlight the unavoidable influence of the experience of the charismatic individual and community in the reading and understanding of texts.[34]

There can be no escaping the subjective element inherent in any human understanding of a text. The world of the writer and the world of the reader can never be absolutely identical. At issue firstly is not so much the human *context* as the human *persona*. Two individuals from identical homes, communities and cultures still do not experience identical personal worlds of perception, experience, pre-understanding and predilection. Individual training and capabilities, personal choices and priorities, personal values and hopes: all play their part in the process of understanding.

While this is inescapably so, it is not automatically devastating for those who apply analytical reason to derive meaning from a text. Hirsch (1967:127-133) ably argues that a *variety* of interpretations does not necessarily imply *contradictory* interpretations, and that there is such a thing as the self-confirmability of an interpretation: a significant championing of analytical logic versus the rule of metaphor and intuition in literary theory.[35] It is noticeable that promoters of post-modernism normally use the 'objective' categories of modernism in promulgating their philosophy (or anti-philosophy). Deconstructionists do not appear to wish their own academic texts to be deconstructed. Those who would propound a post-modern approach to pentecostal hermeneutics couch their arguments in very modern, 'objective' terms. Those who read their works are expected to ask 'what does the writer mean?', not (among other things) 'what function does this article fulfil?' Certainly in Western academic circles there is an acceptance that meaningful content *can* be communicated by means of the written word. (The written texts which set out to expound how literary texts should be interpreted assume for themselves the nature of handbooks, manuals which convey 'technical' information from writer to reader in a concise and logical manner.) The contribution of the human subject cannot be ignored - however, neither may it be absolutised. This is where input from reader-response theories becomes relevant.

The difference in reader-response theories (or 'reception theory') between Iser and Fish should be noted. Where Iser argues for a role for the reader as a subject who 'fills in the blanks' where meaning is not always clear in the plain sense of the text, Fish would argue that the reader is the subject of the entire meaning of the text: there is no meaning apart from what the reader understands (Holub 1984:101-106). While Iser would appear to avoid the extremes of *objectivism*, Fish does not appear as concerned to avoid the extremes of *subjectivism*. Baker (1995:41-43) argues that Iser's understanding of reader-response theory may well be utilised by pentecostals in Bible reading which encourages what he calls (in a Wesleyan sense) 'the formation of the affections'. A sense of historical and pneumatic continuity with the authors and first readers of the New Testament also encourage pentecostals to believe that the semiotic system in which the text has been cast is not insuperably alien to that of the twentieth century pentecostal reader. The peculiar phenomenology of pentecostalism, which appears to correspond to that of the original Christian community, encourages this perception.

The adoption of reader-response categories in a pentecostal paradigm may, however, not be as simple a matter as first appears likely. Iser makes a distinction between *literary* texts and *expository* texts, and appears to direct most of his theorising on reader-response to the former. Indeed, he appears to argue that it does not readily apply to an expository text, which limits the role of the reader's imagination and the scope of possible meanings for the text:

> .... expectations are scarcely ever fulfilled in truly literary texts. If they were, then such texts would be confined to the individualization of a given expectation, and one would inevitably ask what such an intention was supposed to achieve. Strangely enough, we feel that any confirmative effect - such as we implicitly demand of expository texts, as we refer to the objects they are meant to present - is a defect in a literary text. For the more a text individualizes or confirms an expectation it has initially aroused, the more aware we become of its didactic purpose, so that at best we can only accept or reject the thesis forced upon us. More often than not the very clarity of such texts will make us want to free ourselves from their clutches.
>
> (Iser 1986:379)

It has been asserted above that the New Testament, as pentecostals have understood and used it, is precisely such an expository text, in all its varied genre a didactic work which forces upon the reader theses which they must accept and reject, and which has at times driven its readers to attempt to free themselves from its clutches. The usefulness of reader-response theories for pentecostals, with regard to the New Testament at least, might therefore be limited. However, Iser's insight into how the imagination, memory and insight of the reader informs the interpretation of the text is not necessarily inimical to informed historical interpretation, nor to the specifically pentecostal notion of commonality of charismatic experience with the first century church.

It is possible that if reader-response theories understand a text (such as the New Testament) to be primarily a *communication* from an author to his or her readers,[36] then these theories will not necessarily lead to denigration of author's intent as a reasonable goal for hermeneutics. Since the epistolary nature of most of the New Testament is obvious (even the Lukan writings and the Johannine gospel and Apocalypse bearing such distinctives), interest among New Testament hermeneutes might credibly accept as the initial challenge the need to recapture the essence of their message. The text, accompanied by oral exposition by a companion of the author, appears to have been intended to function as a handbook for the early communities,

describing how (and upon what theoretical basis) they should deal with the challenges facing them.

Another issue, apart from the nature of the individual human contribution to the process of understanding, involves the contribution of the individual's (primarily social) *context*. No text is ever approached in splendid academic isolation. Part of the context in which a text is approached is the language in which it is read (but not necessarily originally written). Also relevant is the social context of class, economic means, cultural and religious background, gender, race and education.[37] The *value* attached by a community to tradition or traditions may be crucial.[38] Human self-understanding cannot be divorced from such context. The literary proficiency of a community, the value it places upon *literary* as opposed to *oral* communication, the emphasis upon praxis within it: these all necessarily influence the way a text is interpreted and applied. Perhaps (just as they are becoming more articulate and proficient in the practice of literary theory) pentecostals need to note that emphasis in the audio and video age is shifting to a more oral (and visual) basis in Western culture, and ponder what the implications of this change will be for pentecostal hermeneutics.[39]

Fish argues cogently for the existence of *interpretive communities*, readers who share common interpretive strategies, and therefore common interpretations. While Fish's cynicism concerning the possibility of any text having an objective meaning is foreign to the optimism of many pentecostals on this score, his arguments are sufficiently phenomenologically based to bolster pentecostal arguments that texts which originated in a charismatic community are best interpreted (ie. more likely to be consistently interpreted) in the context of just such a community:

> Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way round.
>
> (Fish 1986:407)

Fish's basic subjectivism comes to the fore as he notes his own model in contrast to the older

(modernist) model which sought to extract meaning from a text:

> .... meanings are not extracted but made and made not by encoded forms but by interpretive strategies that call forms into being. It follows then that what utterers do is give hearers and readers the opportunity to make meanings (and texts) by inviting them to put into execution a set of strategies. It is presumed that the invitation will be recognized, and that presumption rests on a projection on the part of the speaker or author of the moves *he* would make if confronted by the sounds or marks he is uttering or setting down.
>
> (Fish 1986:408)

He ends his article: 'I say it to you now, knowing full well that you will agree with me (that is, understand) only if you already agree with me' (Fish 1986:408). This is reminiscent of a pentecostal writer: 'Either you know what I am talking about (by experience) or you do not. If you do not, you would not know if I told you' (McDonald 1976:66). A pentecostal understanding of the New Testament is that it was formed within a charismatic interpretive community, and thus ought to be interpreted (without Fish's scepticism as to whether there can ever be a question of one specifically valid meaning) within the context of just such an interpretive community.

Gadamer argues that tradition as a vehicle of authority may well be reinstated in the historical method associated with the human sciences:

> These thoughts lead to the question of whether in the hermeneutic of the human sciences the element of tradition should not be given its full value. Research in the human sciences cannot regard itself as in an absolute antithesis to the attitude we take as historical beings to the past.... we stand always within tradition, and this is no objectifying process, ie. we do not conceive of what tradition says as something other, something alien. It is always part of us, a model or exemplar, a recognition of ourselves which our later historical judgement would hardly see as a kind of knowledge, but as the simplest preservation of tradition.
>
> (Gadamer 1975:250)[49]

The understanding of a text is no doubt influenced by its perceived relevance to the reader. This relevance is social, among other things. However, the absolutisation of the social context leads to the minimising of the personal, spiritual, aesthetic or ethical relevance of the text. Yet it cannot be completely ignored, and a viable pentecostal hermeneutic will take note that

pentecostalism is not socially homogenous, and that the categories and values of white middle-class scholars of the First World are not *the* pentecostal categories and values. At the same time the content of the Biblical message must ever function as a challenge to every and any community's understanding of itself and its values. When a hermeneutic merely affirms the opinions of a community, the Bible loses its subversive effect.[41] The descriptive approach to outlining a pentecostal hermeneutic therefore needs to be continually informed by this challenge. This is the reason why, although the primitivism of contemporary pentecostalism leads it to attempt to model itself upon the earliest church community of Acts, it does not accept that community as a *perfect* role-model. Neither may nostalgia for early pentecostalism cause us to lose sight of the imperfections of the movement and its leaders at every stage of its development.

The term 'community' (*Gemeinschaft*, not *Gesellschaft*: cf Tönnies 1887) is perhaps an apt descriptor for the social context in which pentecostals read the Bible. This is defined not so much by economic, political or racial categories as by the far older and more inclusive notion of 'charismatic community'. The commonality of this community is obvious to a pentecostal who moves cross-culturally within the movement, although the pitfalls created by language, cultural conditioning and local ethos cannot be denied. There is an underlying identification and unity in the world-wide 'charismatic community', and a well-developed sense of distinctiveness with regard to the non-charismatic and secular spheres, which makes reading and hearing the Bible in this context different. The contribution of the personal revelatory charisms to the process may also be evident, but even where this is not strongly developed there is a communal perception of what the Scriptures are really all about, although this may not necessarily be consistently articulated. This communality is understood as a work of the Spirit, granting members of the world-wide pentecostal community the 'witness and discernment' of the Spirit to recognise and accept one another. As Hocken (1976:34-35) points out, discernment based on experiential commonality has shown the potential to transcend major doctrinal and denominational discrepancies.

Recent interest has also focused upon the question: what are the constituent elements in the *process* of encounter between a person and a text? What process is involved when the world

of the text presents itself to the human subject? This is most obviously a question of *cognition*, but it also goes beyond this. A person in isolation may approach a text, or may be confronted with or by a text. The process itself, of how understanding is gained, has now become one of the focal points of hermeneutical discussion (e g Iser's emphasis on the role of imagination and memory, of anticipation and retrospection, and of the unfolding of the text as a living event, etc - Iser 1986). This study must take note of the issues raised by those most intensively involved. In fact, this is a crucial interest to pentecostal research. Pentecostals have always argued that understanding of the biblical text does not take place *merely* at the cognitive level, although it must be asserted that is the level where it always *starts* (in refutation of the 'Word-magic' encountered in some charismatic groups).[42] At what stage is an *adequate* understanding of the text achieved? To what extent is the reader assimilated into the world of the text, and the world of the text assimilated into the reader? Is reading/ hearing and understanding purely a process of the mind, or does it continue into (among other things) realisation, demonstration, and obedience, perhaps even assimilation and identification? Is there an obvious phenomenology which can be associated with the 'clear meaning' of Scripture? These questions cannot be ignored by the search for a viable pentecostal hermeneutic.

Ricoeur (1981:145-164) and Jeanrond (1982 and 1991) pursued the debate on the nature of a text and of the notion of *understanding* as opposed to mere *explanation* (the distinction between *langue* and *parole* in Jeanrond).[43] The question of what exactly is a *text* is also appropriate in this regard, where Ricoeur (1981:197-221) argues that the possibility that there could be non-literary or non-verbal texts (such as *meaningful action*) should be taken seriously. The Ricoeurian notion of suspicion and retrieval, leading to the attempt to reach a post-critical understanding of the text (a second naivete), is also relevant here. Current emphasis on *semiotics* and *rhetoric* (as evidenced e g in recent proceedings of the New Testament Society of South Africa) also relates to this matter. The reader-response theories of scholars such as Iser and Fish also concentrate on the process of a reader/hearer being confronted by, or confronting the text. While not everything scholars are debating and proposing in these areas may be relevant or essential to a pentecostal understanding of the Scriptures, a relevant pentecostal hermeneutic will take note of contributions in this area. Some pentecostal interest in some of these areas has already been noted above.

Many pentecostals would probably like to add the proviso to the debate on the input of the human reader in understanding the text, that they are not merely interested in the *function* or *effect* of a text, but in establishing its *content*; not just in *how* the text conveys something, but also in *what* it conveys. They believe there is substance to the New Testament text, an element of data that is to be communicated by the author, so that the reader and reader's environment should not be absolutised and this substance become totally relativised.

4.1.4 Text and 'reality'

Pentecostals have 'traditionally' understood the real world of the text to be the world of *total reality*. The text of the Bible is understood to refer to the reality of God's ongoing history with humanity. The Bible is thus understood primarily as *witness*, as testimony to how the relationship with God and humanity has proceeded, and will proceed. Unlike the world of the religious texts of the East, where physical reality plays an incidental (even negative) role, and spirituality the major, the Bible is not understood to have descended into this sort of dualism. In contrast to the thought-world of modernism, where the 'spiritual' or 'psychological' is understood primarily in reductive terms, as a by-product of human biology or social interaction, pentecostals understand the world of the Biblical text to involve a very real spiritual dimension. The 'reality' of the text for pentecostals is thus an holistic or total reality: there is no aspect of human existence, environment or history which is not addressed explicitly or implicitly by the Bible. Hanson (1995:4-5) points out that the biblical view of reality is not just that there is a spiritual as well as a physical dimension to the universe, but that behind both dimensions is the loving, personal creator God who initiated the world, and determines its processes.[44]

In the main this world is referred to *directly* in Biblical historical narrative. In my own milieu of pentecostal scholarship there are growing questions as to whether the narratives of e g Job, Jonah, Daniel and Esther (some include Hosea) should be understood as literal history or rather

as parable or allegory, as myth or folk-tale. However, there remains consensus that the narratives that purport clearly to be historical are exactly that, and that they refer directly to a real world in which the human spirit, psyche, history, society, religion and culture are all clearly and literally included and addressed. In New Testament studies this obviates the necessity of a demythologising approach, since the references to eg. sickness and healing, to demons and exorcism, are direct and literal, and can be related to commonly-observed parallels in the twentieth century. This is not always accepted in contemporary theological circles outside of pentecostalism, e g Botha (1995:161): 'Luke's "divine author" can only be at home in an ancient world-view..... And his description of evil through the agency of demons is quite strange to my experience.' This cannot be said of countless pentecostal believers, ministers and missionaries.[45]

Many pentecostals have utilised a biblicistic approach which takes even the poetic and often obscure prophetic utterances as literal history.[46] However, most pentecostal theologians are probably aware of the tensions created by this consistent literal approach, and allow that the text refers *indirectly* to total reality in much of the prophetic and poetic witness. At the same time, although the reference may be indirect (as in even the didactic and apocalyptic portions it may be), the holistic reality being addressed is no less clearly maintained.[47] The text of the Bible addresses the total human situation from a comprehensive and consistently divine point of view. 'God-as-he-is' is seen to be at work with 'humanity-as-they-are'.

Such a notion of the relationship between the Biblical text and reality is obviously confrontational and often subversive. The Bible lends itself to ideologies critical of any social, religious and psychological consensus, and is clearly averse to any form of simple reductionism. However, the clear claims of the Bible to divine authority and intent caution those who might wish to enlist the text in their own particularistic subversions. It stands ultimately as the grand divine challenge to all human notions of reality. Pentecostal hermeneutics must allow the text itself to define reality, as well as to stipulate the 'rules of the game' when entering that reality.[48] However, unlike in a game, the literature which is the biblical text 'annexes' and incorporates readers into that reality in their totality, allowing not a single aspect of their human existence to remain unchallenged in the process (e g McKay's

reference to the Bible as a drama into which the charismatic reader is co-opted:- 1994:34-35). Hence the many references to *dying and rising to a new existence* in New Testament teaching.[49]

4.1.5 The text and language

The major interest in the philosophy of language and of linguistics in the pentecostal movement appears to have centred on the issue of tongues (e g Möller 1975:177-192, who gives a review of critique by linguists of the phenomenon of glossolalia). Most pentecostal Greek scholars in South Africa appear satisfied with the limited distinction between the vocabulary meaning of a Greek term (the possible or potential meanings) and its semantic meaning (the meaning given to a specific word by the writer in that specific context).[50] Greek texts such as the New Testament are therefore normally understood in their most basic translation. Perhaps this is in line with the Reformation understanding of the perspicuity of Scripture (influenced more by Antioch than by Alexandria), an optimistic understanding that there *is* a clear meaning that can be discerned without too much effort or dispute.[51] This is useful in terms of relating to the grass-roots of the movement, who are more impressed by the simplest literal interpretation of a text and its most obvious application, rather than in what many perceive to be unnecessary semantic gymnastics to get around or achieve a point. While interest in the philosophy of language as such is not within the scope of this thesis, pentecostal research into the area would have been welcome had it been available.[52]

Developments in the philosophy of language since Saussure, who first described human language as a *semiotic* system, therefore still need to be thoughtfully worked into a pentecostal paradigm.[53] For the purposes of this research it can be noted that it is imperative that the language of a text be translated within the total context of the social and cultural milieu in which it was written. It is precisely at this point that the pentecostal notion of 'pneumatic continuity' with the early church becomes crucial to its attempts to decode the semiotics of the New Testament text. The most valuable contribution of marxist and feminist theologies may lie precisely in this area, that they direct attention to the variety of nuances possible in the use and interpretation of language by particular interest groups.

A pentecostal hermeneutic will have to take clear cognisance of the *limitations* of human language, particularly in its written form, in conveying the real world of the text to the present-day reader. The text itself refers repeatedly to an experiential appropriation of the reality of God, and without entering into this experiential realm the indications and references of human articulation may convey limited or even perverted data to the reader. It is not just language that reaches its limits here: so does rationality. I have worked out the implications of this challenge elsewhere (Clark & Lederle 1989:104-109), since it is not just attempts to understand the Bible that are challenged by the demands of commitment to and participation in the experiential reality of God: so too is any attempt to understand the ethos and *propria* of the pentecostal movement itself.[54]

However, the pentecostal movement has generally maintained a consistent approach to the content of the Scriptures which does not allow that the Bible conveys purely *images* or *symbols* rather than specific 'hard' rational content. It is acknowledged that the Greek of the New Testament may be a complete semiotic system in itself, modified from secular Greek to convey information to and about the earliest Christian communities. Nevertheless, it is not axiomatic that it can be argued from this that it is so alien or divergent from twentieth century languages (and the concepts these convey) that today it conveys primarily connotational data or concepts that may best be intuitively discerned rather than analytically. Nor can it be understood as a semiotic system which operates purely with respect to itself, and not with reference to the actualities of human existence within total reality. Hunt, a Christian scholar who has made an in-depth study of post-modern and New Age trends in contemporary Western society, argues cogently against just such attempts at reducing the Christian reading of the Bible to relativistic 'truths' or 'revelational knowledge' (Hunt 1987:230-232).

Also relevant to a discussion on text and language is the notion of *intertextuality*, the use of a text behind the text available to the present-day scholar.[55] For pentecostals this is particularly relevant in the context of *orality*, the fact that the world in which the New Testament originated was a world in which data were communicated by the spoken rather than by the written word. Loubser has recently presented illuminating data in this regard, which are highly informative to the pentecostal mindset, which understands orality well:

> Writing was seen as secondary to the spoken word and regarded as supportive of it. Eloquence was regarded as synonymous with statecraft, power and learning. The Roman practice of book-burning was reminiscent of the magical properties ascribed to writing and cannot be evaluated in terms of modern censorship norms. General public and intellectual life in the first century remained structurally almost untouched by the facilities of writing. .... the results of literacy only made themselves known gradually over longer periods of time. This oral consciousness exhibited a tenaciousness that extended even beyond the Middle Ages ...
>
> (Loubser 1996:63)

> .... it is evident that Paul's letters were seen as temporary and reluctant extensions his personal presence. His letters are to be regarded as the renewal of an oral presence in the past, and the promise of one in the future.
>
> From the letters we can also gather that the letters accompanied Paul's collaborators as introductory letters. The emissaries, not the letters, were his representatives in the first instance. Most probably they (or one of the addressees) had to read the letters with the style and intonation of the Apostle himself, augmenting the message in the process.....
>
> Although Paul mentions the use of books, his Old Testament citations most probably came from the 'aural' Septuagint he encountered in the synagogues.... It is highly probable that Paul cited from memory..... The LXX was part of Paul's oral equipment. Also his exegesis of the LXX was more reminiscent of the haggadah and halakah oral interpretations of the Torah than that of his learned contemporary, Philo.
>
> (Loubser 1995:64-65)

This awareness of the overwhelmingly oral culture of the first century is crucial to the pentecostal understanding of the Scriptures.[56] They were not communicated to the first communities as complete and autonomous literary works, but presupposed a fellowship, both of the apostolate and of the interpreting community. This fellowship was primarily experiential in origin, called into being by the working of the divine Spirit of Christ. The interpretation of their writings in the twentieth century would thus be most consistently valid where a similar fellowship exists. The use by the New Testament writers of *their* Scriptures may perhaps also inform our use today of the Scriptures they left us. Their use of language, and what it actually referred to, may also be informed by the experiences and values of such a fellowship.[57] These dimensions will be dealt with more explicitly in a later chapter.

4.2 The teleology of the encounter with the text.

A pentecostal literary theory mighty add another question to the five asked by Jefferson & Robey (1986:13-17): *Why* does the encounter between the text and the reader take place?

The question here is: What leads up to the encounter with the text? For what purpose has the text been brought to bear upon the reader/hearer in the first place? In other words, why is the text encountered? Both the *reason* and the *purpose* of the encounter are at issue here. The process leading up to the encounter with the text may be as important as the purpose for which it is approached, or used. From the pentecostal perspective, the former is normally the result of aggressive proclamation of the text, ie. the text comes to the subject. The appropriation of the proclaimed text leads to a radical change in the subject's life, and then provides the subject with a sense of purpose which includes continually re-approaching the text. This sense of purpose in pentecostalism has a twofold intent: firstly, to better understand the depth and implications (and to reinforce them) of the change which has taken place; secondly, to promote that encounter in the subject's own milieu. This intent is not limited to pentecostal scholarship, but is part of the common pentecostal ethos. Pentecostal hermeneutics must take cognisance of the rationale behind pentecostal biblical research and proclamation - it can never merely be for detached and objective knowledge, although it certainly should include a search for truth (the whole truth). This truth in pentecostalism is ultimately personified in the person of Jesus Christ. The search for a pentecostal hermeneutic must stand in the service of the mission of the pentecostal movement: to learn to know, and to bear witness on the basis of Scripture to the risen Saviour, Healer, Baptizer in the Spirit and Coming King. The text is thus most often encountered in a kerygmatic context, rather than in academic research or exegesis.[58] While academic research and exegesis is invaluable, those engaged in it should take note of the utilitarian and very widespread nature of the use of Bible in the movement. This is consistent with the important role of orality and narrative in the growth and extension of the pentecostal movement.[59] While pentecostal academics should not pander to a purely pragmatistic approach to the Scriptures, neither should they provide the sort of scholarship that has little meaningful application in the mission of the pentecostal movement.[60] This is not an appeal for a *purely* inductive approach to the Bible:[61] while preaching the word is a valuable and essential method

of communicating the full gospel message, it does not reduce the Scriptures to a tool co-opted into a para-biblical mission. Scripture must *define* the content and parameters of the mission in which the preaching of itself is utilised.

This survey of the nature of a pentecostal hermeneutic as literary theory may be concluded by asserting that its approach to the biblical texts need not feel threatened by contemporary literary theories. Rather than shying away from the secular discussion, pentecostals may derive considerable insight from it. On the other hand, the gulf which often gapes between the philosophy of contemporary Western society and the ethos of pentecostalism demands that the *values* and *presuppositions* demonstrated in much of contemporary secular hermeneutics cannot always be maintained in our research. The most profitable contribution may indeed be the other way around, with an insider understanding of the relationship between pentecostalism and the biblical record contributing significantly to the current debate on literary criticism. Perhaps, too, pentecostals who accommodate the insights of many contemporary literary theorists (e g Cargal 1993) might first define precisely how they understand the Biblical text as *literature*.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 4

1. 'Encounter with the power of God in Jesus Christ' was the definition chosen as *the* pentecostal *proprium* in Clark & Lederle 1989:102 (expressed as 'a touch of the power of God in Jesus Christ').

2. This does not mean that the movement has not been challenged from time to time by a very real current of anti-intellectualism, dealt with at length in Clark & Lederle chap. 4: *Doctrine and experience* (pp.35-42).

3. Greeley 1987:49 provides comparative data on the growth of this spirituality in the United States from 1973 to 1987.

4. This was the case in 1976 when Bjornstad discussed the proliferation of Eastern meditation techniques which were marketed as 'scientifically' designed relaxation techniques which benefit one physically and emotionally (Bjornstad 1976:19-31).

5. Countries such as South Africa and Russia, emerging from restrictive government and entering the new order of religious relativism, are being intensely influenced by these tendencies. Interest in shamanism has so flourished in South Africa that consultation fees by a 'traditional healer' or *sangoma* are now covered by commercial and state medical insurance funds. There has been a rash of *muti* murders in recent years, where children and women are killed for body parts to be used in shamanistic remedies. This reached a peak of notoriety when police guards at a public mortuary in Gauteng were convicted in 1995 of stealing body parts from corpses.

6. Steyn (1997) discusses an example of a New Age Bible-reading, from the so-called Ancient Wisdom tradition. She notes that not all New Agers are interested in using the Bible at all, but shows in this article an example of a 'spiritual' approach to Scripture, which is not Christian. Pentecostalism is in a position to demonstrate a 'spiritual' reading which *is* Christian.

7. Lederle's (1994:25ff) distinction between ultra-modernism, which leads to the rejection of all authority and normativity, and anti-modernism, which seeks to be a 'reversal of the modernist principle' (p.26), should be noted here. Intense spiritual interest is more 'anti-modern', and this leads Lederle to conclude: '... charismatic thinking shares some common ground with anti-modern postmodernism rather than with the ultramodern variety.' (p.26)

8. This has been my own experience in ministry in an African situation. Anderson-Scott (1961:32-33) records comments from Christian missionaries who have noted that 'servitude to unseen Spirit-forces and the dread of them (are) one of the most common features of heathen life'. The aversion of converts (in KwaZulu-Natal) from Hinduism to all New Age phenomena is powerful. African converts from Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where the shamans make much of herbal remedies, rebuked me sternly in 1995 when I suggested that many 'non-spiritual' medicines had a bio-chemical (and therefore spiritually innocuous) basis, e g quinine! To them, all herbal remedies involve or represent occult powers from which they have been delivered. Anderson (1993:122ff) notes how African pentecostals are sceptical of the 'prophetic' practices of the so-called indigenous Pentecostal groups, including their divining and predicting practices.

9. De Beaugrande (1988:1-22) poses three questions: What *can* texts be? What *can* literature be? What *can* literary theory be? He tentatively answers the first question by attempting to escape the 'objectivity-subjectivity' debate by reference to *discourse* rather than to isolated texts (textuality). '... "textuality" opens out onto "intertextuality" and "intersubjectivity" in the same moment.' (:3). The second question he addresses in the context of a plea for a functional approach to texts (hence the form of his question: 'what *can* literature be?', not 'what *is* literature?'), as opposed to more traditional defining approaches (eg. literature is 'distinctive', has 'special content', is fictional, is rhetorical, etc.). The answer to the third question provides the rationale for the work: there is no single absolute approach to literature that can be considered *the* literary theory, therefore De Beaugrande provides a survey in which he highlights what he considers to be the value of each model.

10. Möller (1994:556ff) appears to make such a distinction between secular history and divine history, in his discussion of the Apocalypse of John. This distinction, which amounts to a dualism in Möller's work, underlies his acceptance of the amillennial paradigm in interpreting that book.

11. This description is consistent with the traditional analysis of New Testament genre: The Gospels and Acts are narrative material, the epistles epistolary, and the Apocalypse of John is apocalyptic literature. Obviously various other genre are found within these major elements, including poetry. The reference to the genre at this stage in the discussion does not reflect upon the *function* they might fulfil in pentecostal interpretation, eg. the epistles (epistolary genre) might imply more than a didactic and catechetic function in pentecostalism, and the Acts (narrative genre) might be used didactically.

12. Academic discussion of the authority and inspiration of Scripture in South Africa in recent years has not included input from pentecostal quarters. Deist (1978), although referring primarily to the Old Testament, separates the authority of the Scriptures from questions of history and historicity. In a later paper he implies that any authority of the Scriptures is provided by the reader (Deist 1979:57ff). Engelbrecht's (1979) contribution on the same occasion was a Reformed evaluation of the notions of inspiration and authority, in which the motifs 'church' and 'tradition' played a role which does not easily relate to the free-church ethos of pentecostalism.

13. The contribution that pentecostals can make to the discussion on the inspiration of Scripture is significant. In a movement which understands that God still speaks directly, there is a deposit of experience in receiving divine revelation which can help provide a framework for understanding how the divine and

human element combined in bringing forth the Scriptures. Pentecostal experience generally precludes the notion of ecstatic reception, where the voice and vocabulary of the human participant are replaced by a spirit 'guest': genuine pentecostal prophecy, for instance, presents itself as a product of divine revelation expressed by means of (or through) the physical and intellectual faculties of the prophesier. That a similar process underlies the more revelatory Scriptures is not difficult to comprehend, in a pentecostal paradigm.

14. This has been the concern of many writers on the charismata, eg. Kelsey (1974), Williams (1972), and Cartledge (1994).

15. I have dealt in detail with the criteria by means of which claims to have had a pentecostal experience might be evaluated, in Clark & Lederle 1989:43-65. Normative pentecostal experience, among other elements, issues in commitment to Jesus Christ, to a lifestyle pleasing to him, and to his mission. The epistolary genre in the New Testament supplements narrative material in illustrating and prescribing how this commitment is expressed.

16. This has been the basic guideline in South Africa, used in most pentecostal Bible schools and Bible classes of which I am aware.

17. I have submitted a paper to the Committee for Doctrine, Ethics and Liturgy of the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA, critiquing Möller's position (Clark 1997). This committee is currently attempting to define a position on eschatology for the church, after the process of racial unity has been completed.

18. Dayton's argument concerning the movement from post-millennialism to pre-millennialism by the Methodists and Holiness believers of the 19th century has been mentioned above. The earlier antecedents of pentecostalism were generally chiliast (cf my argument against Möller in this regard in Clark 1997). The nature of the pentecostal movement as an *apocalyptic* movement (as per Mills 1976) implies a strong chiliastic and futuristic element in its make-up.

19. 'Non-fictional prose... have always had a rather awkward role in a literature syllabus. It is clear that these works are important, but what to say about them has often been less clear. The tendency used to be to regard them as background texts, indicating the kind of cultural climate in which the authors worked... by and large, such texts are not subjected to the kind of critical analysis applied to novels, poems and plays... it might even be said that there is a great deal of sense in reading a philosophical or historical work for its content rather than from the point of view of its form' (Peck 1996:39-40). However, Peck considers Beer's literary critical approach to the works of Darwin, and concludes "The procedures she employs are now widely diffused in consideration of non-fictional prose: rather than just focusing on ideas, critics look at how the writer constructs a narrative, and how language functions in that narrative.' (:40). One might respond that the tremendous impact that Darwin had on 19th century society was the result of the content (the ideas he communicated) of his work, rather than its form and structure. What is significant is that this short paragraph by Peck is the only single discussion of non-fictional prose in a compendium of essays on literary criticism that comprises 768 pages of relatively small print. De Beaugrande (1988) notes that 'Historical texts are mainly rated for their accuracy respecting specific "facts", whereas literature is rated for its insights into what is in principle revealing about the human situation... Philosophy differs from literature by emphasizing explanation over representation. Any represented aspects of reality illustrate explicitly presented conceptions, usually within a single schematic... The situation appears similar in theology. Here, the representation of reality is still more predominantly illustrative, though its explanation proceeds less by logical argument than by assertion of dogma... To read a sacred text like the Bible as literature is to situate its other-worldly reality within a spectrum of alternatives, a heretical move for the true believer.' (:13)

20. For instance, a reading of Luke-Acts that takes its literary nature seriously might well focus upon the strategy of the writer, and how he achieves his purpose (Klauck 1994 is a good example of this). The fact that Acts is a *condensed* and *selective* account of the growth of the early church demands that we do this. However, the stated intention of the author (Lk 1:1-4 and Ac 1:1-2), to supply accurate and adequate

information of historical events, and the concrete way it is linked to secular history (Lk 1:5; 2:1-2; 3:1-2), requires that its claims to be non-fictional prose be respected. Didactic material such as the epistle to the Hebrews and 1 Peter can also reveal strong literary qualities, and even the very simple and utilitarian Greek used by John expresses extremely profound concepts: a characteristic of the literary genre. However, the impact they have had on human and Christian society has stemmed far more obviously from the content they communicate than from the form they assume.

21. Evangelical and pentecostal Christianity share this straightforward approach to the testimony of Scripture. This is probably one way in which their common links with the radical protestantism of the 16th century are made evident, although much is also owed to the Reformation view of the perspicuity of Scripture. The text is taken at face value and applied as a manual for living, ie. for discipleship.

22. The manner in which the Bible was used and understood by Anabaptists, Methodists, Holiness believers and early pentecostals, stands in a 'circular' relationship to the manner in which they lived. They derived their lifestyle from a straightforward reading of the text, but also read the text from the perspective of their choice for a lifestyle of conscious discipleship. The content of the Scriptures and the values expressed by their chosen lifestyle were thus mutually affirming and reinforcing.

23. Iseminger (1992) has collected a number of contributions to the discussion on Hirsch's championing of authorial intent, because 'the more I discussed it with various philosophers and literary theorists in various forums, the stronger it came to seem to me.' These include critics of Hirsch as well as those who are in basic agreement with him.

24. This appears to be Clement's concern when reminding the Corinthians of the words of Paul concerning their schisms (*ICl* 47). He argues that they know what problems Paul had to deal with in that earlier generation, what he had said about their schisms, and what he had intended their reaction to be. This shows that one of the earliest readings of the New Testament epistles was intensely concerned with the intent of the author.

25. It is interesting that both Paul (in the Pastorals) and Tertullian (eg. *Adversus Marcionem*) rail against heresy primarily because of the implication of heresy for the *lifestyle* and *character* of Christians, which threat was evident in the malign character of the heretics themselves. The full implications of heresy lay in the intent of the heretic.

26. The way in which the Old Testament is cited in the New implies that at times this has been understood to be so. The way in which Mt 1:23 understands Is 7:14 implies a re-interpretation of that text in the light of the life and history of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Christological confession of the early church that he was Christ and God. This re-reading of the Old Testament in the New is discussed in detail by Thomas (1994), with reference to the Apostolic Council of Acts 15's understanding of the relationship between Jew and Gentile in the church (see next chapter for a discussion of Thomas's views). McQueen (1995) and Moore (1995) provide contemporary pentecostal readings of Joel and Deuteronomy respectively, which they offer as New Testament appropriations of those texts.

27. Some pentecostal opinions on author's intent and its authority as divine norm are listed here: Ervin discusses this relationship in some detail, concluding that the distance between Creator and creature is bridged, but not erased, in the regeneration-event (Ervin 1985:28). Although grammatical-historical exegesis is a prerequisite for understanding Scripture (:25), it is not enough, and a pneumatic hermeneutic is required that leads to a comprehension of the content of Scripture which is not merely cognitive. Ervin's final indicators for a pentecostal hermeneutic include (:34-35): an assumption that the Biblical narratives are accurate and factual; the data given by the New Testament concerning the words and deeds of Jesus is reliable and essential historical data; the implementation of grammatico-historical and critical-contextual methods of, and contributions to, exegesis (this includes attempts to establish author's intent); and awareness of the miraculous elements of reality imparted by pentecostal experience. Spittler (1985) provides an example of pentecostal exegesis where authority is presumed to lie in the intent of the apostle and the Christ who commissioned him. Note his reference to exegetical Bible

reading: 'It is enough if, reading carefully, I can hear the Word of Him whose voice I know.' (:65). He then proceeds to interpret 1 Cor 11:2-16 with the clear intent of determining Paul's strategy and intent with the Corinthian church. Menzies'(1985) description of the inductive level of Scripture interpretation includes the following statement: 'One employs the tools and skills of scientific interpretation to ferret out the meanings and intentions of the biblical writers.' (:5) He clearly identifies this intent as correlational with that of the Divine author, as implied in his argument for *normativity* (viz. divine ordination) for certain phenomena recorded in the narrative of Acts (:9-10). Autry (1993) argues for pentecostal adherence to the centrality of the authority inherent in 'author's intent', while noting that some arguments for this seem facile (his discussion of Kaiser on pp.34-35), and that Ricoeur's apparent concurrence may not be all it seems (:36-37). In discussing the normative value of historical precedent, Fee argues 'for a biblical precedent to justify a present action, the principle of the action must be taught elsewhere, *where it is the primary intent so to teach*.' (Fee 1976:128-129 - my italics).

28. Examples used in this research are Wire 1990 (which discusses the Corinthian women prophets from the perspective of Paul's rhetoric) and Witherington 1995, a socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians. Bezuidenhout 1980 provides a pentecostal discourse-analysis of 1 Cor 12-14.

29. From the beginnings of the discussion of hermeneutics by pentecostal scholars there has been an awareness of the short-comings of historical method which seeks primarily to 'objectively' establish context, intent and content of the text. This is subsumed by Menzies (1985:5ff) under the *inductive* level of interpretation, to be succeeded by *deductive* (:10-12) and verificational (:12-14) levels. Ervin's (1976:33ff) argument for a pneumatic hermeneutic posits beginning at the level of the application of grammatical and historical hermeneutical principles, but proceeding in the context of personal pneumatic experience within a pneumatic community to apprehend a meaning deeper than the purely historical. Using concepts gleaned from Gadamer and Ricoeur, Gräbe sees this development beyond (or apart from) historical inquiry to include *application*, *appropriation* and *assessment*. These terms are strongly nuanced in the works of Gadamer and Ricoeur, and may not necessarily be the equivalent of what many pentecostals might understand their face value to be.

30. e g Verryn's (1983:4) dismissal of the notion of the 'latter rain' as being a poetical description of the normal processes of the Palestinian seasons. 'To equate the "former rain" with Pentecost, and the "latter rain" with modern Pentecostalism is purely arbitrary'.

31. Autry (1993:35-36) cites D A Carson ('Hermeneutics: a brief assessment of some recent trends', *Themelios* 5.2, Jan 1980, p 15) as saying we must not be seduced 'into thinking that partial knowledge is necessarily false knowledge'. Autry adds: 'nor is it necessarily useless or irrelevant.' (:36). The tendency to so absolutise the gap between the world-view of the author and that of the reader as to make nonsense of any optimism about meaningful transmission of content, is foreign to the 'primitivism' of the pentecostal movement and its antecedents. However, this should not be viewed as an excuse for simplistic biblicism. Forewarned that such a gap *does* exist, pentecostals need to look to their tools and method in order to do justice to the text.

32. Farah (1980a), in a critique of the Faith Movement, provides a detailed discussion of the difference between the two notions, faith and presumption.

33. 'Marxism has been the most powerful influence on criticism throughout the twentieth century. Either alone or in combination with other approaches such as psychoanalysis or feminism, the very pervasiveness and power of Marxism, compounded by its own internal variety, makes this impact difficult to describe adequately... Marxism situates any cultural practice (literature, art, craft, film, whatever) in its historical contexts, and this history is specifically, but broadly, one of socio-economic development.' (Knowles 1996:568). This 'historical' interest of Marxism is not the same as the interest of historical-critical enquiry, but is centred on the way in which the class-groups identified by Marxist social analysis have *experienced* history. McCartney (1996:596) says of Freudian influence on literary theory: '... Freud's influence on modern thought has been a lasting one even though his theories have been a continual subject of controversy and a source of challenge. This is especially true in the field of

psychoanalytic literary criticism where, despite constant revisions and refinements, new developments have tended to be assimilated into the old framework, with the effect that all psychoanalytic criticism has its origins in Freud's theories.' The powerful influence of these two giants in the twentieth century appears at times to have produced a form of Correctness in literary studies which is currently being challenged in the United States (although the challenge is growing elsewhere) by groups such as the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics (ALSC). Lacayo (1997) describes their origins and purposes. These are described as '... resistance fighters against prevailing academic trends, mainly the ones - deconstruction, cultural studies, gender studies - that probe literature for its complicity in racism, colonialism, sexism and homophobia.' (Lacayo 1997:47) Lacayo quotes Ellis of UCSC: 'If young people didn't speak the language of race, gender and class studies, they could not get jobs.' ALSC provide information on their aims on the World Wide Web (Association of Literary Scholars and Critics 1996).

34. e g Baker 1995, who argues for the employment of Iser's reader-response theory in pentecostal reading of the Bible. His basic argument is that 'scholarly' readings of a text alienate the whole-person reader, since emotional or 'affective' responses are not considered scientific. Pentecostal readers, who stress the involvement of the total human persona in the theological and religious task, can therefore offer a model for reading Biblical texts where the contributions of the affections to the reading process can be taken seriously, and have crucial implications for attributing meaning to texts. He sees Iser's reader-response theory, with its terminology, as a useful vehicle for describing this process in pentecostal reading.

35. Booth (1970) has published a compendium of his own essays, written primarily in the years of student unrest in the West, which were aimed at asserting the primacy of analytical reason over rhetoric, intuition and metaphor in post-McLuhan communication.

36. As in Speech-Act theory and Eco's transactional model of literary semiotics.

37. 'Relevant' in this context does not necessarily mean 'crucial' or 'determinative'.

38. Spittler (1985:72ff) expresses his surprise (as a pentecostal and a scholar) on discovering the role tradition played in understanding texts and other communications in the first century church.

39. The South African milieu provides interesting material for the study of community, media, and interpretation. Television was first introduced into South Africa in 1976, so that students now arriving at post-secondary training institutions are the first of the 'video age'. In one class one can have older students whose lives were little affected by the medium, and younger students who were literally raised and 'baby-sat' by it. When these same students represent widely differing cultural and language groups, as is the case in the First/Third World interface that is South Africa, the effects are even more challenging. The use, effect and interpretation of electronic media is something that pentecostals need to review with great urgency from a scholarly perspective. The increasing use of the Internet by pentecostal scholarship is a reassuring sign that adaptations are being made to deal with these challenges. Malanowski (1997) discusses the implications of interactive cyber-technology for the next generation, concluding with a quote from Strommen (of Microsoft): 'These kids are going to have a much more open, interactive, collaborative, verbal, thoughtful environment, and that will change the way they will be as adults.' (:TD12)

40. Perhaps Peter Berger's (1971 & 1973) work on the objectification process by which a community 'fences off' and declares sacred a certain understanding and philosophical terrain could also contribute to the process of understanding achieved within the context of a given community. Pentecostals who have an experience of cross-cultural work will understand how important the contribution of any community is to the understanding and application of the Bible within its ranks, as in eg. the primarily non-literary African cultures. However, the dangers associated with the absolutisation of the human context of community and tradition should not be ignored. In the unification process of the once racially divided pentecostal churches in South Africa, contributions by white scholars to the theological *foci* of the debate were at times dismissed by blacks because of the social context (white middle-class) in which they had been formulated. The reverse was often also true, viz that many white pentecostals evaluated and rejected

black 'contextual' contributions as 'communist-inspired'. Where social context (and its underlying philosophy) is absolutised, some form of 'political correctness' inevitably tyrannises. Since 'correctness' implies conformism, this is not an option for the pentecostal community which stands as one of a long series of 'radical alternative' groups.

41. Social and community awareness raises the challenge of *recontextualising* the Biblical message without *redefining* it, as mentioned in the discussion of post-modernism in the previous chapter. The relevance of the message proclaimed from the text will be *affected* by the community in which it is proclaimed, but need not necessarily be *determined* by it. The relevance of the Biblical message to all communities consists in its identity as the revealed speaking of God. Volf (1997) has set out the challenges of this intersection between gospel and culture.

42. The term 'cognitive' here is taken to mean 'recognised by the faculty of cognition in the human subject'. 'Knowing' begins with perception by the rational faculty. If the text comes to readers who are illiterate, they have no means to begin comprehending it until it is read to them. Therefore the ability to read the text, or to hear the text in a language that one understands, is a presupposition of the interpretative process. One therefore first encounters the Biblical text at the cognitive level. This may *result* in an affective encounter (Baker 1995), or a pneumatic encounter and apprehension *by* the Truth (Ervin 1985) - both of these scholars argue against the limitations of the *merely* cognitive comprehension of a text. That the appropriation of the text should not be *limited* to the cognitive is indubitably axiomatic to pentecostalism. However, if the text were understood to have some form of spiritual effect upon those who encounter it, without having first been cognitively encountered, then one is dealing with 'word magic', the belief in some intrinsic power in the text to achieve something even though not understood. Paul's argument for comprehensible and intelligible communication (1 Cor 14) in the worship service of the church is an assertion of the primacy of the cognitive process in appropriating meaning. I have dealt with related issues in Clark 1995b.

43. Jeanrond (1986) examines the notion of 'interpretation' in the light of Gadamer's description of the process of understanding, and of Ricoeur's theory of interpretation. He examines the notion of 'reading' in the light of the contributions of Iser and Fish. He examines the notion of theological interpretation of texts in the light of David Tracy's hermeneutical theory. What is relevant to this study is Jeanrond's own contribution to the notion of interpreting a text. He differs with Ricoeur's model of *steps* of interpretation, offering as alternative a model incorporating *dimensions* (:68-69). Effectively he adds the dimension of *assessment* to what he implies are the mutually agreed dimensions: of understanding (of sense) and explanation (of textual structure). Assessment is 'related to the tension between the textual sense being disclosed and teh reader who discloses, a tension which culminates in the personal responsibility of the reader in relation to the textual sense disclosed by him/her. The reader's assessment of the text is not an ultimate judgement about the sense of the text but rather a certain achievement of interpretation which, while concerned with a critique of content and situation remains at the same time continually conscious of its hermeneutical limitations' (:69). 'Assessment is also the level of interpetation on which the interpreter becomes ethically active and that in a twofold manner: to the extent that he/she tries to do justice in the best possible manner to the text, and to the extent that he/she thinks through in a responsible manner,as reader, his/her relationship to the text' (:70) In contemplating reading of specifically Christian texts, Jeanrond notes the Christian community has undertaken 'to devote its attention to their specific claim, to allow itself to be provoked by this claim and possibly allow itself to be moved to a new and responsible self-understanding' (:122). He notes that this devotion implies a dangerous ambiguity: that the text be recognised as crucial provocation to re-reading and re-assessment, but that just this authority poses the danger of 'sanctification' of the texts and insistence on a 'correct reading' (:122). He argues for a specifically *theological* reading of the biblical texts as part of the level of assessment in reading, since 'a non-theological reading of biblical texts is indeed possible from the point of view of the technique of reading. But it may not then lay claim to finally do justice to the texts... "Theological" means here not that the reader her/himself must believe in God or Christ in order to responsibly the text but means rather that every reader whether a beleiever or not allows the text to validate its claim which is, finally a theological claim' (:127). He summarise his approach to reading biblicca1 texts with a final dimension of assessment to mean 'assessment of biblical texts consists

accordingly in exposing their main claim which we have acknowledged to be theological and, corresponding with a reading genre and a reading function compatible with this claim, in doing justice individually and as far as possible to the text in all its dimensions. In this way a response to the text is vindicated in a responsible and personal manner' (:127). Jeanrond (1991) provides a more detailed overview of theological hermeneutics, from the point of view of its history (going wider than Gadamer and Ricoeur). He discusses this history again in terms of the notions 'text' and 'interpretation'. He opts again for a methodology informed by the critical hermeneutical methodology of David Tracy, in which 'he proposed that every theologian must be involved in the interpretation of both the Christian tradition and the present world as the context of such interpretation' (1991:174). Tracy and Jeanrond thus both insist that Christian hermeneutics involve and be aimed at an understanding not just of texts, but of traditions within and without the church, and of the wider human situation and quest for meaning (:182). Of interest to a pentecostal hermeneutic could be Jeanrond's emphasis on the ethical aspects of interpreting a text, and his notion that theological hermeneutics, while dealing with specifically theological texts, should not be conducted apart from investigation of the wider human situation. Pentecostals might no all agree that 'sanctification' of biblical texts is 'dangerous', since, while they maintain that the authority of the text resides in its divine author rather than in the text, the text is nevertheless special not just because 'theological' but because of its divine origin. The dynamic of the pentecostal movement undermines any suggestion that this is a statement purely of dogma, since the pentecostal attribution of *authority* to the text exists in dynamic relationship (circle?) with the empirical demonstration of the *effect* of the text. Pentecostal phenomena and the testimony of the text therefore are understood in pentecostalism to be mutually affirmatory. Certain phenomena occur because the text says they will - the text is authoritative and reliable because of the attestation of the phenomena accompanying its proclamation.

44. The Anabaptists lived as though the reality described and communicated by the Scriptures was the only relevant one. Their rejection of the oath, and their refusal to baptise their infants, challenged the political notions of reality extant at their time. They unashamedly paid the price for this. Radical alternative discipleship, in their case, was based upon a radically alternative perception of reality. The life and values of Jesus of Nazareth was the perfect testimony to this alternative perception, particularly in his encounter with the powers of his day, both religious and political.

45. Tarr (1997) discusses the challenge of this perception and experience of reality for pentecostal academics, drawing from his own experiences in the mission field in Africa. J Ma (1997) and W Ma (1997) discuss the interaction between this perception as held by pentecostals and some of the societies with which pentecostals deal in the Philippines. It is clear that much of the success of pentecostals in reaching so-called 'primitive' societies has been built upon a similar acceptance of the holistic nature of reality, although the pentecostal perception confronts, challenges and contradicts the details of the animistic world-view at almost every point.

46. This is not to deny that such portions may validly be interpreted as *promise*, etc.

47. In Clark 1997 I have discussed Möller's lack of distinction between *symbol* and *allegory* in interpreting the Apocalypse of John. He also settles for a dualism between 'divine' or 'spiritual' history and human or day-to-day history which is difficult to maintain within the context of an apocalyptic movement such as pentecostalism. The dualism of apocalyptic is evident primarily between the age that is to come and the age that now is. However, even this dualism does not demand that an absolute discontinuity exist between the two: the apocalyptic kingdom will be established in terms of rule on this planet among this species.

48. Archer (1996: 80): 'Pentecostals believe that God still speaks today and when God speaks, God has more to say than just Scripture, *yet it will be scripturally sound*.' (my italics).

49. The impact that Anabaptists, Methodists, revivalists and pentecostal missionaries have had on their societies has been the result of commitment to a reality (or perception of reality) which is different to that of their contemporary church and secular societies. Although this endowed them with 'irritant' qualities,

it also challenged what might otherwise have been left as it was.

50. The contribution to New Testament scholarship of Louw & Nida (1988) in this regard has been widely recognised, to the extent that the most popular Bible software available now includes their New Testament dictionary as part of its set of tools for interpretation.

51. Yoder (1985:117): 'With regard to translation in the literal sense, Eugene Nida used to say regularly that no translation from one language to another can ever be perfectly accurate, but that in every specific interlinguistic interface it is possible to find a substantially adequate rendering of the central point of the original text. What is thus said about moving from Greek to Swahili or Chinese can also be said *mutatis mutandis* of restating in 1983 what was at stake when Jeremiah or John was writing. We can never know perfectly, but we can understand substantially.' Most South African Christians are acquainted with the Bible in more than one language, (usually at least English, plus some other indigienous language such as Afrikaans or Zulu) and are therefore normally aware of the differences in nuance that can arise in the process of translation.

52. Although Autry (1993:33-37) discusses pentecostal hermeneutics from the perspective of language, his primary interest is in the possibility of establishing author's intent, or whether the meaning of the text actually transcends the limit of what the author meant. He notes in the first two paragraphs that the notion of language and its underlying structures is receiving considerable attention in hermeneutical philosophy, but does not contribute more than that on language as a semiotic system.

53. Colomb (1987) describes these developments in terms of the variety of perspectives currently on display. '... semiotics cannot be considered a strongly unified field of study; indeed it is not yet clear what kind of unity semiotics might have - as a school, method, theory, or discipline. But however that field is circumscribed, all varieties of semiotics are grounded in the study of sign functions and their typologies.' (:309) He defines literary semiotics thus: '... literary semiotics has two diagnostic features: the analysis places the text as the focal object in a communicative or transactional model of the literary event, and it explains that event in terms of codes or systems theory.' (:313) Discussing Eco's transactional model of literary semiotics, he maintains: 'Semiotics' promise of a common language is the promise not of a common understanding but of a vigorous debate informed by reliable analyses. The transactional model assumes that to practice a particular way of reading is to adopt a specific, although not necessarily well-defined, set of reading codes, and that to adopt this or that way of reading is not a matter of literary theory but of value-governed choice.' (:314) He further links the notion of semiotics to Iser's reader-response theory (:340ff). The notion of interpreting language as a set of codes determined by a presupposed set of values might be profitably applied to the process of pentecostal Bible reading, although the implied relativism of Eco's transactional model challenges pentecostal self-understanding. The benefit of this approach is that it does recognise the text as a communication rather than purely an art-form.

54. E g McDonnell 1973:51: 'What the classical Pentecostal does and says is often far better than what he writes. There is no way one can reduce to the printed page the atmospheric dimension of Pentecostal communications.' This was probably true for the Bible writers themselves.

55. Wendland (1997:160) defines a text as follows: 'A *text* is a discrete segment of human communicative behaviour, one that consists of a structured set of *signs* selected from a larger inventory or code, whether oral or written, verbal or non-verbal. Such a text has the capacity to convey some specifiable denotative and/or connotative meaning ("significance") within a given sociocultural setting and situation of interpersonal interaction (often referred to as the "*context*"). He notes that the notion of *intertextuality* is described by scholars in both a wider and a narrower sense: on the one hand there are those who see it as locating a text within a larger linguistic frame of reference, i e there are what he terms specifiable texts (oral or written) that the author of a given text consciously or unconsciously draws upon (pre-texts); on the other hand, there are those who see the broader underlying semiotic framework of a given culture or context to be the pre-text within which a given text is constructed (Wendland suspects that this brings the notion of intertextuality too close to the concept 'presupposition') (:160-161). The use of an author

of a text of pre-texts calls into play elements of *correspondence* (the extent to which the text being produced corresponds/contrasts to its pre-text), *salience* (how crucial is the pre-text to the current author's strategy and objective, and *relevance* (what the receptor of the new text will make - consciously or unconsciously - of author's use of the pre-text) (:161-162).

56. The notion of orality underlies the Speech-Act theory (SAT) of Austin and Searle. Straus (1987) describes Speech-Act theory as an attempt to take the meaning of the author seriously, as well as including the reader in the meaning-constructing process. 'SAT became allied not only with the recovery of authorial intention but with a new emphasis on the role of the reader and ultimately with the communal nature of reading conventions.' (:218). The emphasis upon a text as the product of a 'speaker' is probably helpful to pentecostal understanding of Scripture, although SAT itself probably does not offer an unqualified option for pentecostal hermeneutics (cf Straus' conclusions on the work still to be done in this area, and some of the method's shortcomings: pp 243-245.). Hollenweger (1982) and Frör (1994) provide imaginative reconstructions of the situation in which the Corinthian correspondence proceeded between Paul and that church. Both emphasise the underlying orality of the culture as well as of the transmission and reception of the text (reading and hearing in the congregation).

57. Jacob Prasch of the UK, a pentecostal teacher of Jewish extraction, is currently working on the notion of pentecostal interpretation of the New Testament from the standpoint of the Jewish *midrash*'s which were known to and probably presupposed by the Jewish authors of the New Testament documents. Prasch has not published, but numerous videos of his teachings are available from Moriel Ministries (which he founded). This ministry is present on the Internet, with an email address moriel@sgi.net, and Prasch at yacov@moriel.unet.com.

58. Tarr's (1997) challenge to pentecostal academics is relevant here. After listing great revivals that broke out in Bible Schools, he urges his hearers: 'Many of our fearful critics have forgotten that the Pentecostal revival of this century did not first start at a mission on Azusa street in Los Angeles, but in a Bible School in the state of Kansas. Brothers and sisters, let us lead the way again!' (:200)

59. The civil war in Mozambique, following hard on the heels of the independence struggle, has left the country virtually in a Stone Age situation in many areas. Possession of a plastic cool-drink bottle is in places a sign of wealth. Many of the pastors and church leaders have no Bibles, and for many who do, it is the only book they possess. Writing paper and implements are extremely scarce, and the people have often reverted to pre-literary methods of operating. During church conference time, early in the morning the women (who are not always taken very seriously by the male church workers) work in the wash-rooms. Often one will 'preach' the previous evening's sermon word-for-word to her 'sisters'. Sometimes this preaching of the sermon will be passed from one to other in turn. Confronted by this, one is amazed at how influenced and restricted our personal retention and communications abilities have become in a literary society.

60. An international gathering of Deans of academic institutions, in Pretoria in July 1997, at a gathering termed GCOWE (Global Consultation on World Evangelism), committed itself to the promotion of academic syllabi that emphasised mission and evangelistic content. Although there are concerns that this might be a pandering to the pragmatic influences in the evangelical and pentecostal community (that often deem practice to be possible without theory), most academics acknowledge that much of what is offered in seminaries does not admit of, not to speak of encourage, such activities.

61. Note my definition of 'inductive' in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 5

ASPECTS OF A VIABLE PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTIC

An alternative to looking beyond pentecostalism itself for a hermeneutic is to take the distinctive aspects of the movement into consideration, and to attempt to formulate hermeneutical principles and a hermeneutical framework consistent with the ethos of the movement itself. At this stage the relevance of the descriptive task of this research becomes most evident. Unless pentecostalism (and this is relevant to pentecostal scholarship in particular) has a clear self-understanding, it could lack clarity in the manner in which it approaches the Scriptures. This does not mean that the way Scripture has been used in the movement should be canonised; it does mean that the formulation of a pentecostal hermeneutic should be largely consistent with what the pentecostal movement is and has been doing. There is an unavoidable *ex post facto* element to pentecostal theology (MacDonald 1976:65; du Plessis 1977:183-184). A proposal for a hermeneutic which might impede the dynamic of the movement from achieving its full potential may be questioned.[1] A pentecostal scholar, perhaps more than any other, will grasp what it means to approach the task of theology with 'fear and trembling'. James' warning on the perils of being διδάσκαλος comes to mind: μεῖζον κρίμα λημψόμεθα (3:1).

It is not the intention of this chapter merely to record the proposals of various pentecostal scholars. As a pentecostal minister and teacher I have long been impressed with the self-understanding of the average pentecostal believer: a member of the people of God of the new covenant *par excellence*. The people of God in the Old Testament experienced the powerful intervention of God in profane history sporadically, through the mediation of isolated charismatic *individuals*; yet nevertheless to such an extent that their history became involved in God's history. The people of God in the New Testament experienced the power and presence of God in their midst and in their mission on an ongoing and permanent basis; they were a charismatic *community* of charismatically endowed individuals. The twentieth century pentecostal revival is a renewed awareness and experience of that ongoing history, in which God is understood to be present among and with his people. This is probably a crucial element

of the pentecostal distinctive: a unique perception of the mode of God among us: Pentecostals

> 'will insist on the continuity of the mode of God's presence in and among the faithful from the creation down to this very day. Therefore God is as much a causative agent today as he is pictured in the biblical writings.'
>
> (McLean 1984:38)[2]

Thus the three elements highlighted by Arrington (1988) are still admissible as being broadly true of a pentecostal hermeneutic: *illumination* by the Holy Spirit (here and now), the crucial role of spiritual *experience*, and a distinctive approach to the *narrative* texts of the Bible. Thomas points out that the task of identifying a consistently pentecostal approach to the Scriptures is not just a chauvinistic interest (the evaluation in South Africa of König (1991:19) of attempts to formulate a distinctive pentecostal theology), but that it parallels many of the current concerns in hermeneutical philosophy. The role of the community in the interpretation process, the renewed interest in pneumatology, and the role of biblical narrative, are examples (Thomas 1994:42-43). For this reason the elucidation of a pentecostal paradigm for Scripture interpretation may be a valid and considerable contribution to the larger hermeneutical discussion within the church.

The three phases in the search for an adequate pentecostal hermeneutic, as outlined by Byrd (1993:205-206), are also still relevant to that search. Recent attempts to find a paradigm for such an hermeneutic in the post-modernist (contemporary literary theory) approach (the third phase) have not replaced the original interests, but have engaged pentecostal scholarship more closely with the ongoing academic discussion on interpretation of texts, and have also prompted pentecostals to closely examine the philosophical implications and presuppositions of their distinctives. In so far as it creates awareness of developments in wider scholarship, this is a positive development. As long as pentecostal scholarship takes historical categories seriously, the role and interpretation of biblical narrative (phase 1) will always be a vital factor in the formulation of pentecostal distinctives. And the issue of methodology (phase 2) cannot be isolated from any credible hermeneutical process - even a denial that 'method' should tyrannise an interpretative process has methodological implications. However, as scholars whose approach to the Bible is generally conservative, pentecostals are well aware that a method *can* become a tyranny, as has happened with the historical-critical method in secular and liberal

theological circles. The scepticism in this regard of a hermeneute such as Gadamer (1975:5-10) cannot therefore be ignored.

Within the Pentecostal community the Bible functions as more than a source-book of doctrine. Indeed, this might be one of its minor roles. In line with the ethos of the early church and the radical Reformation groups, primary emphasis has been upon the Scriptures as a book for *living*. At times and in places this *has* degenerated into a form of legalism, where the Bible is used as a system of laws to guide every aspect of personal life and liturgical expression.[3] However, more usually the Bible has been used to depict a world in which God and people can relate meaningfully and concretely to one another. Hence the importance of narrative for pentecostalism. It has been the sincere desire of pentecostal believers to live in what could be termed 'the world of the Bible' (which is not necessarily the same thing as what Ricoeur means by the 'world of the text'); to implement the world of the Bible in contemporary society; to demonstrate the power of the God of the Bible today; and to realise in their own lives and churches the benefits and charisms recorded in the Bible. Where this desire is not allied with uninformed biblicism and a naive approach to historical discontinuities, it can engender challenging examples of radical discipleship of Jesus Christ. The relationship between the Bible and the pentecostal movement could be defined as mutually affirming, a unique perspective upon the Book which cannot be denied in the search for a pentecostal hermeneutic.

5.1 The ongoing history of God

While recognising that major historical discontinuities are evident between the *world* (culture and ethos) of the New Testament text and the world of modernity, pentecostals insist that there are no serious discontinuities between the *way* God revealed his presence and power then, and now. While the great events of salvation history are obviously in themselves non-repeatable (the manger, the cross, the empty tomb, the rushing wind and tongues of fire), there is no compelling reason to believe that the daily experiences of the first generation Christian community were intended to be purely inaugurational. Nor that subsequent Christian experience of God would be mediated in a different way to that made evident in the witness

and liturgy of the first churches.[4] Some historical Christian groups see a positive aspect in the episcopalian development of the early church, and its subsequent accord with the Roman state under Constantine. Pentecostals, on the other hand, have tended to view the progression of the church after the first generations as downward, away from the purity of its beginnings. This primitivist perspective has obviously been influenced by earlier Spirit movements and free-churches, since it has been echoed over the centuries by many dissenting voices. At its heart is the free-church ethos (the legacy of the Anabaptists) which rejects any State(world)-church synthesis; however, added to this is the notion that the Spirit and ethos of the first generations of Christianity may be captured in virtually *every* aspect, including the charismatic. The pentecostal notion of being a Latter Rain movement acknowledges the historical discontinuities of the church, those ages in which the power and voice of the Spirit seemed to have been stilled. However, it also asserts that now God has chosen to continue his history among his people, as in the days of the Former Rain.

Implicit in this vision is a rejection of the precedence of the world-views of modernity over those of the Bible. At issue here is not so much the world-views (cosmology in particular) held by the human authors of Scripture, but the world-views promoted by the Bible itself.[5] Modern physical science and the education systems of the West have increased the knowledge of the average Westerner to a phenomenal extent (in comparison to a mere generation or two ago), and this affects our present-day understanding of the fabric of the physical universe, including the human body. However, the materialistic and positivistic assumptions which usually accompany that science have not offered viable solutions to the great questions of human philosophy, such as 'who am I?', 'where do I come from?', 'why am I here?', 'is there a purpose to life?', etc. The world-view of the Bible is not a challenge to the faith Christians have in the laws of the physical universe.[6] But it is a serious challenge to the reductionism and relativism which permeate modernity and post-modernism. What the Bible has to say about humanity, about God, about origins and purposes, was a clear confrontation of the contemporary world-views of the milieu of its human authors, and stands today in contrast to the major tenets of both modernism and post-modernism. While pentecostals consider themselves part of the ongoing history of God and his people, their existence and practice will also consistently challenge the complacency and despair of their age. The pentecostal

movement is itself a phenomenological argument for the historically consistent relevance of the Christian Scriptures.

A pentecostal hermeneutic will take cognisance of this, particularly in the area of biblical ethics. There is a strong tendency in any society to absolutise the consensus ethic of the age, and since this has rarely been the ethic of the Scriptures, for that age to condemn and reject the values of Scripture. In South Africa Wolmanrans has exemplified this view. He argues that many biblical texts appear to promote notions which are unacceptable to the consensus ethic of the late twentieth century, eg. they appear to promote anti-semitism, sexism or racism (1994:18-19;22). Apparently for Wolmarans it is the consensus ethic which remains unquestioned; using it as a basis, he quotes studies which argue that sometimes preaching should actually be *against* the tenure of a biblical text, and not for it (:19). Therefore, implicitly, the content and values of the Scriptures should not be proclaimed in such a way as to contradict the values current in society.[7]

Pentecostal use of the Bible will, for itself, have to continue to challenge such an overtly reductive approach to the biblical text. Taken literally, the content and message of the New Testament is undoubtedly uncomfortable to live with. It challenges the deepest and most widely-held assumptions of society, offering radically alternative perspectives and values. In a notoriously libertarian age, it makes authoritative demands. Wolmarans is concerned primarily about biblicistic interpretations of certain pericopes derived from exegesis based on the structuralist paradigm, and perhaps in this context much of his wider argument may be granted. However, he nevertheless approaches the Bible from the point of view of a secular consensus and then uses it primarily as a source of symbols supportive of that consensus. This means that he is taking less than seriously the alternatives propounded by the text itself.

Ervin has argued cogently that the modern pentecostal's identification with a previous people of God has important implications for the use of the Bible in pentecostalism. Propounding a 'pneumatic hermeneutic', he argues that the common experience of twentieth century pentecostals and believers of the first century church, accompanied by a distinctive phenomenology[8], makes possible a distinctive interpretation of the texts produced by that age.

> When one encounters the Holy Spirit in the same apostolic experience, with the same charismatic phenomenology accompanying it, one is then in a better position to come to terms with the apostolic witness in a truly existential manner..... One then stands in continuity with the faith community that birthed the Scriptures.
>
> (Ervin 1985:33)

The importance of this historical and phenomenological continuity has been identified by Cronjé as well:

> Paul never hesitated for one moment to write to the Spirit-filled Corinthians. He was aware of the fact that without advanced linguistics and application of grammatical rules in interpreting Scripture, they would nevertheless understand by the working of the Holy Spirit what he intended to convey in his letters. After all, they had had the same experience of the Spirit that he had. (My translation).
>
> (Cronjé 1981:38).

It may also be that such commonality of experience (and therefore of understanding) among first century Christians is behind Paul's argument to the Galatians in 3:1-5.

MacDonald shows the importance of this notion of common experience, and how provocative it can be, when he concludes his presentation on pentecostal distinctives by claiming: 'Either you know what I am talking about (by experience) or you do not. If you do not, you would not know if I told you.' (MacDonald 1976:66). One is reminded of the oft-heard exclamation of the initiate into the world of pentecostal and charismatic experience: 'The Bible seems to have become a totally new book to me!'.[9]

McKay (1994) has discussed at length the implications of his personal charismatic experience for his understanding of the Scriptures. Since, like Ervin, his specific concern is biblical theology and hermeneutics, his comments are relevant to this study. He has the added advantage of being a 'convert', in the sense that as a non-charismatic biblical scholar he had previously applied to his biblical studies those hermeneutical methods which were current in many theological faculties in the United Kingdom, and has thus been a participator in both modern and charismatic interpretation:

> There are basically two ways of studying Scripture. One is objective and analytical, interesting in itself, but imparting little or nothing of the life of God to the student. The other, the way explored here, draws us to God and gives us life. When I discovered new life in Christ through the infilling of his Spirit, I knew nothing else would ever satisfy.
>
> (McKay 1994:18).

McKay adequately expresses throughout his work the frustrations of attempting a relevant pentecostal or charismatic approach to the Bible within the confines of contemporary academic institutions and methods.[10] His comments under the heading *Shared experience of the power of the Holy Spirit* are most apposite at this point. Quoting Peter's invitation to the bewildered inhabitants of Jerusalem (Acts 2:38-39), he says:

> On the day of Pentecost Peter invited his hearers with these words to share in the apostles' experience of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals claim that the invitation is still open and that acceptance of it radically changes a Christian's view, not only of his or her own faith, but also of the faith of the Early New Testament church, and even of the prophetic personalities of the Old Testament.
>
> (McKay 1994:26)

He lists a number of important immediate results of his own decision to take up Peter's invitation. He could 'no longer acquiesce in the views held by non-charismatics about the gifts and found myself instantly dissatisfied with almost every commentary on the subject that I read.' (:27) 'The miraculous and the supernatural in Scripture readily become part of charismatics' shared experience.' (:27) In the context of specific charismatic manifestations he says:

> One area where shared experience completely transforms biblical interpretation is that of the prophetic word. The liberal views prophecy as something inspirational only in a very loose and vague sense..... Prophetic experience, however, encourages a very different view, for the mediation of messages directly received is of the very essence of charismatic prophecy.
>
> (McKay 1994:28)

> Equally, however, charismatics would find it hard to acquiesce in the fundamentalistic view of literal, mechanical inspiration, as though God had precisely dictated every single word that is spoken.... The utterance is certainly inspired, but it is filtered through a human channel, with result that it is in the end a near, hopefully very near, approximation to what God wants to communicate. Or as Paul puts it in 1 Cor 13:9,

'we prophesy in part' (i.e. imperfectly).

(McKay 1994:29)

McKay intersperses his argument with consideration of critical questions, such as whether the charismatic phenomena of today are indeed identical to those recorded in the Scriptures (:27); and how prophecies, dreams and visions should be tested and evaluated (:29). He notes that an argument for a distinctive pentecostal approach to the Scriptures, based on experience of the Spirit, could be challenged with charges of arrogance (:37). Yet his work articulates what is a central and crucial issue for pentecostal theologians: by the baptism in the Holy Spirit one becomes dynamically part of the ongoing history of God, by shared experience one of the biblical people of God; and that this reality affects not only the way one approaches the Bible, but also the way one experiences it, as well as the reason one uses and applies it.

The difference between the Old Testament people of God, and their experience of the intervention of God in their history, and the people of God of the New Covenant, must be emphasised. While pentecostals and charismatics can indeed identify with many Old Testament characters, particularly the charismatic leaders, the mode of God's being among his people under the Old Covenant was sporadic, isolated and selective.[11] It was the essence of prophecy concerning the promised new covenant that the new era would entail the indwelling Spirit of God in *all* God's people, as Peter indicates clearly by citing Joel in Acts 2. The Old Testament people of God were not a priesthood nor prophethood of believers. Their experience of God was primarily external and mediated, whereas the new covenant promised the inner dwelling of God, and doing away with human mediation between the deity and humanity. Now the people of God could be co-workers with God, children of God not only by adoption but also by regeneration. Although pentecostal studies should not ignore the Old Testament, our common experience is with the New Testament people of God rather than with the Old Testament charismatics. In one sense their lonely sojourn in and alienation from their world was anticipatory of a radical alternative discipleship community - they were after all in their generation *the* radically alternative people of God. But in another, New Testament context, Christians cannot feel as isolated as did the charismatic Elijah or Jeremiah. By experience pentecostals understand themselves to have been not only baptized into one body by one Spirit, but also all filled with that same Spirit, and to be part of a charismatic brotherhood the Old

Testament prophets did not know. A pentecostal approach to Scripture will be illuminating in its use of the Old Testament;[12] but will have radical implications for every aspect of Christian theology when applied to the New. McKay's arguments echo Ervin's, and make it clear that a credible and relevant pentecostal hermeneutic demands a credible and relevant pentecostal hermeneute.

Thomas (1994) links up with earlier work by Arrington (1988) and Moore (1989). Noting that it is an approach already used in popular pentecostal circles, he attempts to formulate a model for the use of Scripture based upon the procedure used in the Apostolic Council of Acts 15. He isolates three major components in the process: the role of the community, the role of the Holy Spirit's self-revelation in and through the members of the community, and the final appeal to the text of Scripture (Thomas 1994:49-50). Central to Thomas' thesis is that pentecostals today form (or should form) just such a community, in which the work of the Holy Spirit is obvious to all. On this assumption he proceeds to apply a parallel process to the question surrounding the role of women in pentecostal ministry, and argues that a much more accommodating position could be taken by pentecostal denominations on the issue.[13]

Relevant at this point is the pentecostal ideal of identification with the ethos of the primitive church community. While this community cannot be (and generally is not) upheld as a *perfect* model for contemporary pentecostalism, the nature of the testimony of God in its midst, and the importance of such manifestations for interpreting God's plans and purposes, is instructive. The basic point of departure, the reason why the text of Scripture was invoked at all, was the existential question 'what is God doing? where is he going?', rather than the propositional 'what is correct doctrine for the church?'[14] Thomas clearly intends that the modern pentecostal movement, in its biblical theology, should similarly maintain itself in thought and practice as a contemporary continuation of the people of God of the new covenant.

Interesting in this context is Yoder's contribution to the discussion on the use of the Bible in theology. On the basis of his won Anabaptist roots, he argues that the *type* of community which is using the Bible is critical to the biblical findings derived by it (in the following reference the point being discussed is pastoral care):

> The Bible is not simply a document of churchmanship with pastoral preoccupations. The particular kind of church of which it is the testimony is a missionary, aggressive, and subversive movement. We misunderstand even the practical/pastoral thrust of the Bible whenever we compare or equate it with the pastoral concerns of an established religion.... Pastoral care in the established church and in the minority missionary movement are two quite distinct operations.....
>
> The real foundation, both formally and materially, for Christian witness is the historic objectivity of Jesus and the community he creates.
>
> (Yoder 1985:114-115)

If the community of Acts 15 is considered to have been the creation of Jesus, the wording of the Lukan introduction to Acts becomes significant: the former volume (the gospel) was of what Jesus *began* both to do and to teach. Luke maintains that the Acts records the continuation of the creative activity of the Son of God. If the twentieth century pentecostal movement considers itself a product of that ongoing creative activity, then it can learn from the procedures adopted by the original model in the first century. At the same time there is a caution for the contemporary movement in such a process: it can only be validly applied in the context of the ongoing and consistent manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life and experience of the community.

Turner (1985:18ff) discusses the development of the notion of the 'witness of the Spirit' from the radical Reformation via Pietism to Methodism and the Holiness movement. While the major emphasis of the radical Reformation had been upon *obedience* to the word, this obedience came to be seen by the time of the Wesleys as based upon a change of heart to which the Spirit *witnessed*, testifying that forgiveness and adoption by God had truly occurred. Turner argues (:22) that this rediscovery of the 'witness of the Spirit' restored the cutting edge to Christianity, leading to its huge advances in the revival and mission movements that sprang up from Anabaptism to the 19th century.

5.2 Implementation, demonstration and realisation

The pentecostal movement has generally attempted to be practical in all it does. At times this

has degenerated to a pragmatism which can only be harmful, viz an attitude expressed as: if it works, adopt it![15] However, practical theology does make legitimate demands of biblical. The primary use of Scripture in pentecostalism has been not so much in catechetics (a neglected area in the movement), but in liturgy, preaching, counselling and missions. It is obvious that the Bible has been loved and applied, with the emphasis upon use rather than upon understanding. But when such a serious and influential theologian as F P Möller (snr) urges the theological college of the Apostolic Faith Mission to stop presenting such 'dead wood' as Old and New Testament introduction (at a conference of pastors in August 1988), then it becomes clear that it is a major challenge to biblical theology that it be relevant to the ongoing dynamic of the pentecostal movement. Pentecostal biblical scholars must deal with the problem of a negative image within the movement. While ensuring that they do not compromise their particular calling to be true to the Scriptures, they are also challenged to fuel the pentecostal dynamic, and not to fulfil the role of the 'wet blanket'. While addressing and correcting the inevitable tendency of dogmaticians to cast pentecostal doctrine into immutable categories, pentecostal biblical theology must also promote (and provide the tools for) an aggressive and dynamic implementation of the pentecostal witness in the world.[16]

Key terms in the pentecostal movement are *communicate* and *experience*.[17] *Understand*, in its more abstract and intellectual sense, features only as a secondary issue. The content and message of the Scripture was thus primarily to be *implemented, demonstrated and realised*. It is expected that in contemporary pentecostal liturgy something will be seen to occur; that pentecostal preaching will promote obvious change in lives and situations; and that pentecostal counselling will achieve constructive results. In all three activities the Bible has a major role to play. Ideally, it functions as instigator, as content, as control, and as goal-setter. It provides the rationale, the substance, the guidelines and the intent of those activities. Pentecostal biblical exposition serves not merely as a corrective to illegitimate practice and conceptualisation (belief), but its proponents are also ideally to be seen to be sharing, promoting and supporting the aims of legitimate practice and belief.[18]

This pentecostal idea of implementation occurs at a more dynamic level than the traditional understanding of *applicatio* in hermeneutics. It does not refer primarily to 'being confronted

and changed by the text'; in a real way it does not refer to the effect of the text at all. It refers to the effect of the God to whom the text testifies. The practice of pentecostal kerygma argues that the Bible does not invite readers into a 'world of the text' which may or may not challenge them by its symbols and signs: it declares that there is a God who, in real space-time events, delivered, saved, healed, empowered and comforted his people, and that these sort of things are still being done today. The *applicatio* of pentecostal hermeneutics may therefore exceed the subjective effect of the text referred to by Gräbe's concluding remarks:

> Theologians are endeavouring to understand themselves in the light of the text, ie the 'what' and 'about what' of the text. They allow themselves to be exposed to the text, in order to receive from it a *Self* - .... - a mode of subjectivity which responds and corresponds to the power of the New Testament to display its own *world*.
> (Gräbe 1993:9)

Pentecostal application and implementation proceeds beyond self-understanding and a conceptuality that accords with the world of the New Testament text: it demands *objective* phenomena, observable by believer and critic alike, in the space-time continuum in which participators play out their daily lives: forgiveness of real guilt, deliverance from actual bondage, healing of physical ailments, an increased personal power to witness that has a real impact on their environment and milieu.[19] As Hattingh (1984:223) states, with direct reference to pentecostal preaching: 'Our integrity is questioned if we proclaim these important deeds of God, and yet it remains but words and nothing happens in our gatherings' (my translation).

Menzies argues that a holistic approach to the Scriptures was evident both in Acts, and in the origins of the modern pentecostal movement at Topeka. The Bible was approached inductively, deductively, and at the level of verification:

> If biblical truth is to be promulgated, then it ought to be demonstrable in life. This is precisely what the modern Pentecostal revival has been reporting to the larger church world. It was the inductive use of the Bible that led students at Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, in 1900-01 to expect a baptism in the Spirit with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues. When they in fact experienced precisely what they thought the Bible was teaching, they were then able to affirm the continuity between biblical concept and experiential reality. Their whole understanding of the apostolic church was transformed. They discovered a synthesis of truth at the inductive level, at the deductive level, and at the verificational level.

> ..... Exposition and testimony flow together throughout the speeches of Acts. There is a joyful verification of the prophetic word. Thus in the very fabric of the Acts itself is the precedent for holistic theology. Truth and experience are harmonised.
>
> (Menzies 1985:13-14)

The challenge to the contemporary generation of pentecostal scholarship is to provide a product which, while not necessarily conforming to the demand for 'more practical content, less theory' that one hears in many sectors of the ministry, nevertheless promotes the 'fire of God' (Moore 1995; Tarr 1997) in the academic institutions and personal ministries of pentecostalism.

DeArteaga (1992) has decried the sort of theologising that seems rather to quench the Holy Spirit, than to stir the church to 'move with His flow'. While he presents an academic apology for the 'new' charismatics, or Faith Movement, much of what he appears to be defending is not readily defensible. However, the attitude he identifies is at times evident, when 'authoritative opinion' rather than 'spiritual discernment' is used to evaluate spiritual phenomena (DeArteaga 1992:19). Like the Pharisees, such an evaluation could be 'heretical in spite of its theological correctness' (:17).[20] Anderson's comment is relevant here:

> Pentecostals are not unnerved by the search for a theological explanation for a divine act that has been experienced but not understood. Using this approach, the search cannot help using historical and personal supernatural experiences as a part of the formulation of doctrine. This is in contrast to groups that discount anything for which their doctrine has no explanation.
>
> (Anderson 1990:58)

There is a danger in such an approach to the Scriptures which arises when the human participants in the divine act are not always very well informed with regard to the biblical witness. This might then lead to a commitment to 'guidance' which is not always in line with the witness of Scripture. Pentecostals need to stress time and again, particularly in the face of spiritual enthusiasm, that the leading of the Spirit, the character of Jesus Christ, and the testimony (content and intent) of the Scriptures are never in tension with one another.[21]

Hattingh (1984) has attempted a fusion of the traditional three practical theological fields of interest in his doctoral research. Entitled *Proclamation and celebration as therapeutic motifs in pastoral care* (my translation), the work endeavours to provide a pentecostal model for

understanding God's working with humanity in the pentecostal worship service. Central to his argument is the notion of 'realisation of the truth':

> When we celebrate the truth we are not concerned with the making known of certain truths, but with truth that happens. It is thus not enough to proclaim, among other things, salvation, forgiveness, atonement, love, healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, in a theologically correct manner, without these things becoming truths that take place in the worship service, or unless in the liturgical direction opportunity is given for them to occur. Unless truth becomes events, we have to do with only half the truth. (My translation)
>
> (Hattingh 1984:222)

This emphasis is similar to Ervin's *pneumatic phenomenology*, to Menzies' *verificational level*, and to DeArteaga's interest in promoting the working of the Holy Spirit rather than quenching it on *a priori* theological grounds. It endeavours, as do they, to put heart into pentecostal ministry, not by unhelpful criticism from the sidelines, but by offering a rationally coherent framework in which the text of Scripture can be interpreted in a supportive manner. Hattingh (:154-168) also notes that it is not merely the sermon (i e the use of Scripture) that ought to be relevant to the pentecostal ministry, but also the preacher. Not only the nature of the exegesis, but also of the exegete, is crucial to pentecostal hermeneutics.

5.3 Narrative, patterns and practice

The fact that the Pentecostal movement considers itself to be a continuation of the Bible story indicates why the narratives of Scripture are so important to the movement. The biblical stories are taken seriously as 'patterns' according to which God works. They are illustrative of the type of people and of conduct which is pleasing to God, and the alternatives which displease him. They provide models for the dynamic interaction between human beings and the deity. The stories do not merely show *what* is acceptable to God; neither are they merely symbolic of the content of a God-humanity encounter: they also graphically illustrate the *how* of the encounter. Rather than being viewed from the sceptical detachment of modern scientific objectivity, they are affirmed to be essentially repeatable, re-livable.[22] They are never reduced to mere folk-myths, but are understood to represent a real world, where a real God can

encounter real people, with an accompanying real phenomenology. These stories of the Bible do not function merely as a world of symbols (however relevant), but encourage and warn the hearer because they are so potentially and potently re-livable. The biblical witness to God's involvement in history is not understood by pentecostals to have been cast in such an alien semiotic system that its language cannot be 'decoded' in a literal and meaningful way today.

Ellington describes the centrality and impact of 'witness' and 'testimony' in pentecostalism, leading to a theology which is largely oral, experiential and narrative. It is also ultimately extremely democratic (as in the Anabaptist ethos), accenting individual*ity* without the over-emphasis of individual*ism*. The twentieth century pentecostal then becomes an extension in this age of the testimony and witness of Scripture to God's activity in an earlier:

> Testimony and oral expression lend themselves to the understanding and knowing of the God with whom we are in an active relationship, and it requires no 'special knowledge' or expertise in order to participate actively in the search to know God... By encouraging each member of the community of faith to share testimonies of his or her experiences of God and to participate in illuminating these experiences in dialogue with Scripture, the church community, and the Holy Spirit, the opportunity and responsibility to know God is shared by all... The result of this theological approach for the question of biblical authority is that this authority is not imposed from 'above' by church leadership, but the Bible is experienced as authoritative as the Holy Spirit is found to be at work in and through the Scripture in the lives of each member of the church community.
>
> (Ellington 1996:27)

McKay refers to the biblical narrative as a great charismatic drama (McKay 1994:32-33). Even the scholar is invited to join the cast upon the stage, since this stage includes every other type of person imaginable, from fishermen to Oriental *magi*. The play is still running, and the scholar is challenged both to evaluate the respective performances from a critical distance, and to participate in the plot (:35).

Again the important distinctions between Old and New Testament charismatic modality cannot be ignored. On this continent such distinctions are overlooked at times in African Christianity.[23] Set in a tribal culture, the Old Testament stories abound with isolated heroes, great leaders who stood, or fell, in a special relationship with the deity.[24] Standing spiritually

head and shoulders above the rest of the nation as they did, these men often serve as literal and simplistic role-models for contemporary African religious leaders. Such leaders then attempt to operate as Christian shamans, drawing followers after themselves, and utilising biblical and quasi-biblical symbology in their dress, ministry, religious trappings, rituals and furnishings.[25]

The New Testament challenges this view in many respects. It affirms the existence of a new state of affairs: there is no distinction among believers in terms of the Spirit which is at work among the people of God, although there are significant differences in ministry and calling. However, as a priesthood of believers the modern Pentecostal movement cannot encourage a too literal identification with the Old Testament pattern of exclusivity. It can recognise, however, that the charismatic experience of isolated individuals then, may well be potentially actualised in every believer now.[26] Nevertheless, the narratives of the New Testament should probably be given priority in establishing models for pentecostal experience. Absolute primacy should be given to the stories of Jesus, the ultimate pentecostal role-model in character and values. In line with its radical Reformation roots, the pentecostal churches would not contradict the ethos of their origins if they were to rediscover themselves as a discipleship movement, in which imitation of the Master is an essential part of daily personal and corporate life.[27]

Part of the success of Pentecostal missions during this century is owed to the emphasis in the movement on orality and narrative (Mulrain 1986; Van der Laan 1986). This should not be seen as true only in the First/Third World interface of missions, but also in the success achieved among the so-called 'lower' classes in First World countries. The early pentecostal pioneers did not arrive in South Africa, for instance, with a new *creed*, but confronted their peers by telling a *story*. This story had concrete links with the biblical story, and was demonstrated (by the attendant charismata) to be continuing into the present. The hearer was invited to enter the world of this story, and share in its excitement, sacrifices and benefits.

What makes the pentecostal story easy to identify with among non-literary societies is the clear demonstration of power accompanying the proclamation. Most of the congregations established in the first decades of the movement can point to dynamic interventions of God among their community, which led to the establishment of the pentecostal community. The tales of

healings, revelations, relevant prophetic words, even resurrections, are clear evidence that these people found it a simple matter to walk into the ongoing biblical story. In the Third World the demonstration of the healing power of Jesus Christ probably remains the single most crucial factor in the continuing spread of the pentecostal movement.

The story-teller still has a major role to play in the pentecostal / charismatic movement. While the most popular story-tellers at this time, within the evangelical movement, are usually informed and well-read persons of the teaching type (e g Colin Urquhart and Ivor Powell) whose tales have strong evangelistic impact, in the pentecostal movement this is not the case. It seems that the general pentecostal public prefers the ministry of the evangelist,[28] who in the pentecostal movement is often very dramatic and also often has less formal theological training, to that of the teacher. This is probably because the heart of the evangelist's task is to tell the story in a convincing way.[29]

A model for the use of the New Testament which would correspond to the nature of the pentecostal movement it would serve, will not ignore the role of the story. The challenge to the biblical theologian who is also pentecostal is to use the story in a different way to the evangelist. The biblical narrative can be utilised to evoke emulation not only in terms of encounter and experience, but also in terms of sober instruction and development of character (Birch & Rasmussen 1976:104-112). It can also be used in a more abstract sense, to provide categories, patterns and models for formulation of doctrine. Anderson (1990:57) counsels caution in this use, however. Once stories become normative, there is no readily apparent objective norm by means of which the more important stories can be distinguished from those which should not be stressed. Intensive use of narrative can degenerate into mere allegorical interpretation.[30]

The fact that the pentecostal movement has understood Luke's stories in Acts literally and emulatively has led to disputes with non-pentecostals concerning the issues of 'subsequence' and 'initial evidence'. This was at one stage *the* area of debate between pentecostals and evangelicals in North America, and then within the movement itself. The accusations of non-pentecostals (e g Culpepper 1977:98, but also the Pentecostal Fee 1976:119-120) that

pentecostals (illegitimately) formulate doctrine from history, underlies the discussion. A simple pentecostal refutation of that allegation might be to insist that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was never primarily a *doctrine* in the NT church, but an *experience* which was subsequently reflected upon. Indeed, to a great extent this has been true in the contemporary pentecostal movement as well.[31] And an experience is best validated by confirmatory testimony from Scripture. The obvious validation for a doctrine expressed in abstract intellectual terms would be the epistolary portions of the New Testament, perhaps even the narrative of the parable. But the most consistent and viable validation of an experience would be historical narrative. Hence the role the narrative plays in pentecostal practice as pattern and example, providing categories and models for interaction with God. Peter's assertion concerning the validity of the experience of Cornelius' household is appropriate here: they had received the Holy Spirit ὡς και ἡμεις (Acts 10:47). There was a recognisable similarity between the experience of the Roman household in Caesarea, and that of the Jewish disciples in the upper room. Luke appears particular in describing this experience in the household of Cornelius in similar terms to those used in Acts 2 - there was speaking in tongues which magnified God.[32]

The heart of the theology of the pentecostal movement can perhaps be elicited, not by asking the question 'Do we believe the same things as the first Christian community did?', but by 'Do we experience God in the same way the first Christian community did?' If this is asked, then it would be surprising if biblical historical narrative were not to play the authoritative role that it does in pentecostal theologising.

This is true not only for the role of biblical narrative itself, but also for the importance of the historical background to the non-narrative portions of the New Testament. The historical situation in Corinth is one of the more obvious examples, since this challenging situation in this church drew the most detailed instruction from the apostle concerning the role of the charismata in the church. There is almost as much material for pentecostal theology in the extra-Acts story of Corinth as there is in the biblical narrative itself. If the story is to be relived (or, as in the case of Corinth, more appropriately lived), then it must be done so validly. The apostolic instruction is vitalised when the real-life situation in which it originated becomes clear. For the pentecostal, New Testament introduction as a science is not mere historical

research, but is an absolutely crucial discipline, since it paints a dynamic backdrop to the ongoing biblical story.[33]

To conclude this section it is necessary to refer to allegorical preaching in the pentecostal movement. Although it is obvious that the historical background and context of a biblical narrative is crucial to a pentecostal understanding of the text, one of the most popular preaching styles in the movement is the allegorical sermon. Many pentecostal students in South Africa aggressively resist instruction in hermeneutics which deplores such an approach. Some have seen an overwhelming number of preachers achieve 'success' with such preaching, and they attempt to remain loyal to such role models. The disadvantage from the point of view of a sound pentecostal theology is that the biblical narrative is often subverted to achieve the preacher's own ends. In effect, instead of entering into the world of God's story, some preachers take God's story by force and make it serve their own ends - make it their own possession, an instrument under their control for their own ends. In a movement where emphasis upon experience can lead to dangerously subjective trends,[34] a tendency to allegorical preaching could so weaken the biblically historical basis by which experience is validated as to severely challenge the movement's right to call itself 'Bible-based'.[35] It could also rob the biblical narrative of its confrontational value, as such preaching might 'tame' or even pervert the story. [36]

Artful story-telling makes effective preaching. Yet many pentecostal preachers fail to appreciate how the literal historical narrative can be made to live, for both the preacher and his hearers.[37] It is not necessary to spiritualise the historical events; in fact, such spiritualisation often deprives the narrative of its dynamic. It would appear that much allegorical preaching has been adopted from dispensationalist evangelicals or fundamentalists - those who are forced by hermeneutical constraints to allegorize or spiritualise the supernatural stories if they wish to make them relevant for today. The pentecostal is under no such compulsion - the ideology of pentecost insists that the story continues, and that what actually happened is more relevant than any spiritualised rendering can make it. However, to make the literal story come alive demands a certain level of intellectual commitment from the pentecostal preacher. And to demonstrate its relevance for contemporary society might demand a level of participation in

the dynamic of the ongoing history of God that far exceeds the admittedly rigorous intellectual demands.[38]

5.4 The authority of the biblical canon in the light of ongoing revelation in the pentecostal movement: divine revelation via the charismata

In any discussion between evangelicals and pentecostals, this is an issue which is bound to be raised (Robeck 1987:65. My own intensive debate with the Evangelical Fellowship of South Africa is reflected in Clark 1988). Much of the evangelical dispensational argument for the discontinuance of the charismata beyond the apostolic age is based upon the premise that a church which possesses a consensus canon does not require (nor recognise as legitimate) ongoing prophetic revelation. Such revelations were a temporary measure while the canon was being compiled. For many of them, it can only be valid to say 'God says' when it is Scripture which is quoted. Claims to have received revelations or 'words' from God are virtually blasphemous to such a theological conviction.[39]

However, for pentecostals revelation *is* understood to continue within the pentecostal and charismatic movements. Millions accept that 'God spoke' during devotions, or during a service, or at His own, totally unexpected initiative during the course of one's normal daily round. The debate within pentecostalism is not the legitimacy or otherwise of the notion of such revelations, but their relation to the Scriptures. Accepting that a prophecy uttered during a morning worship service is truly an oracle of God, a 'word' of God, how does such a 'word' relate to *the* word: the Bible? Robeck's contribution (1987) outlines the history of this problem during the time in which the canon was being formed. The situation today is that the canon is accepted by pentecostal and non-pentecostal alike as being completed and closed. How then must prophetic utterances and other charismatic revelations be understood, when they claim to be God speaking?[40]

Most pentecostals would probably be content with a distinction between the permanent, written

word of God (the Christian canon) and the immediate, local and specific speaking of God in a more limited context. This is often referred to as a distinction between the λογος and the ρημα of God. The former is that which God has spoken, which stands immutable and non-negotiable. The latter is the 'speaking' of God at a given time and place, at which the λογος becomes divinely relevant and applicable. Fourie (1990) attempts to come to grips with this distinction, proposing a model for understanding this relationship. Under the heading *Prophecy: a relational experience*, he argues that a prophetic utterance can be viewed as definitively divine in its origins, but applicable purely in relation to its context, viz the community and situation within which it is uttered (Fourie 1990:41-49). If this is so, then the practice of distributing transcriptions or recordings of prophecies should be viewed with caution. Leaving aside the fact that each prophecy should be evaluated by those who hear it (and who presumably know both the situation and the speaker), any attempt to perpetuate such a 'word' stands in danger of implicitly granting it equality with the Christian canon.[41] Robeck provides an informative list of such tendencies in church history, recent and remote (Robeck 1987:65-66). It is interesting that as long ago in contemporary pentecostalism as 1934, Horton advises the person prophesying against using the phrase 'thus says the Lord' (Horton 1934:187-188), insisting that speakers take personal responsibility for their words and not lay claim to being automatically and unquestionably an oracle of God.[42]

Revelation associated with the charismata is thus *relatively* (Fourie 1990:41-49 says *relationally*) authoritative, viz within a given circle and situation. However, while rejecting its absolutisation into 'revelational knowledge', it should also not be reduced to that level of complete or total relativism which e g some post-modern categories might assert. From Paul's careful treatment of the subject in 1 Corinthians 14, it appears that it truly does matter what the *content* of a prophetic utterance is. Those who are present when it is uttered are to judge whether it is a genuine prophecy or not. The demands of Christian love mean that a genuine prophecy will edify, exhort and encourage the hearers. There are concrete parameters by which not only the phenomenon but also the content is tested. A most recent systematic and comprehensive presentation of such parameters has been recently given by Cartledge (1994:114-120), earlier in South Africa by Bezuidenhout (1980:336-338). Aune (1983:217-230) shows how such criteria were applied in the first century church. The notion that the

Spirit of God stands over against seducing or false spirits is strongly represented in the New Testament (e g Rom 8:15; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 1:7; 1 John 4:1-3.)[43] The false prophets in the Old Testament received (or should have) short shrift; there is no indication that their New Testament counterparts have been released from the constraints of accurate and adequate content. While appreciating that there was a tendency toward formalism in the second century church which provoked such 'spiritual' reactions as Montanism, present-day pentecostalism is nevertheless critical of the Montanists' departure from the necessity to test their prophecies against the Scriptures.

McKay notes that much of the Bible is itself the product of charismatic activity, or, like Luke's gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, is a charismatic history (McKay 1994:30-31). Stronstad (1984 and 1997) and Menzies (1991) also refer to Lukan theology (which is expressed purely as narrative) as *charismatic theology*. Thus the ongoing charismatic experience of present-day believers can be considered a logical extension of that history. God has not stopped speaking, even though none should now presume to archive his speaking and publish it as a new canon.[44]

A significant challenge to the continuation of the pentecostal movement is in the gradual *cessation* of the charismata in pentecostal circles. The movement is seeing a generation arise in which personal familiarity with the spiritual gifts is extremely rare.[45] It is in such an environment that the possibility arises of illegitimate substitutes for the real charismatic manifestation of God's presence.[46] To ensure it remains a genuinely Bible-based movement, the pentecostal movement will have to broaden the basis of the prophetic and revelational ministry within its own ranks: its sons and its daughters, its servants, its old men and young - all of these need to experience the revelatory work of the Holy Spirit.[47] As McLean notes while repudiating the legitimacy of a fundamentalist paradigm for pentecostalism, 'If we lose our hold on the Bible, that infallible rule of our faith and our conduct, we are lost' (McLean 1984:36). And the Scriptures, for pentecostals, cannot be separated from what they describe and proclaim: the presence of God among his people in a dynamic, charismatic way (:37).

The problem for pentecostals is thus not so much a question of how there can be some other authority alongside the Scriptures (prophecy, dreams, visions, etc), but how the Scriptures

could be adequately understood outside of a personal and community context in which those revelations are regular occurrences. Yoder notes that the use of Scripture (the process of theology) in the early church went hand in hand with the presence and working of the Holy Spirit, and *vice versa*. Commenting upon the resolution of the potential conflict in Ac 15, he says: 'There is no tension or contradiction between saying that this result was the work of the Holy Spirit and saying that it was the result of proper procedures of conflict resolution and decision making' (Yoder 1985:118). He then comments:

> ... We are explicitly urged to consider the variety of gifts as one special sign of the guidance of the Spirit. The gifts of prophet, teacher, moderator, etc., all contribute to the process of theological articulation. They contribute best if each has maximum liberty to contribute in its own way and if the exercise of those liberties is itself co-ordinated in the right way (which coordination is also one of the gifts). The one thing which the New Testament language on these matters gives us no ground for is the notion that the theological task could be exercised in isolation from the bearers of other gifts or from the surveillance of the total community.
>
> (Yoder 1985:118-119)

Ellington notes the same relevance of all the gifts of the Spirit to the processes of theology and of living:

> Because the pentecostal worldview is not confined to the western world of scientific method and observable fact, it is open to hearing the voice of Scripture differently. The authoritative voice of the Bible can no longer be restricted and reinterpreted by the confines of the possible. Tongues, complete sanctification of the believer, miracles and the supernatural intrusion of the Holy Spirit into the lives of believers are just as fully a part of what God is saying through Scripture to the church today as is the command to love, a preoccupation for the needs of the poor and oppressed and the commission to preach the gospel. For Pentecostals, biblical authority need not be modified and contained by the possible, the practical, or the expedient.
>
> (Ellington 1996:35-36)

Ellington refers to the attempts by Johns (1993)[48] to overcome the subject-object tension involved in 'knowing', derived from Greek thought, with the more comprehensive Semitic sense of ידע. This 'knowing' entails more than (i e it proceeds beyond) cognition, and involves integration of the entire persona and its context into the relationship between the knower and the known. It is thus intensely experiential, and implies that to 'know God' entails encountering God. In terms of pentecostal interpretation of Scripture, and its acceptance in that

community as authoritative, Ellington makes the radical statement:

> Because most formal doctrine is expressed through and bound up in a rationalist paradigm, the community of faith in a dynamic, experiential relationship with God, and not the academic community, is the proper setting for the discovery and exploration of the Pentecostal understanding of biblical authority. Pentecostal doctrine, in order to speak to and interpret experiences of encounter with God, must arise out of experience and be subject to examination and conceivably alteration by experience, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit.
>
> (Ellington 1996:29)

Autry comments:

> ... the Bible is the 'map', not the 'territory'. The territory is life with God, life as God's people. Map reading can be done by someone outside the territory but not to the same effect. Study of the Bible pays its greatest dividends to one who is in the territory, who is interested in exploring it and becoming more proficient in living in the territory.
>
> (Autry 1993:43)

5.5 'Illumination' by the Holy Spirit

Thomas notes that the role of the Holy Spirit in the decision-making process at the Apostolic Council in Acts 15 'clearly goes far beyond the rather tame claims regarding "illumination" which many conservatives (and Pentecostals) have often made regarding the Spirit's role in interpretation' (Thomas 1994:49). Arrington's (1988:382ff) description of the role of the Spirit in the process of interpretation, as understood and experienced by Pentecostals, also far exceeds the notions of 'illumination' that have been handed down from the Reformers: it includes elements such as shared experience (with the earliest believers) not only of faith, but of a 'walk with the Paraclete' (:382); it goes beyond the merely cognitive apprehension of Scripture, via a pneumatic epistemology to illumination by the Spirit that takes place in a 'lived response to [the pentecostal's] lived relationship with the Spirit of God'. (:382) The large measure of harmony achieved by the various early pentecostals in their understanding of the Scriptures argues, says Arrington, that 'the Spirit of Truth was indeed guiding their hermeneutic.' (:383).

Turner (1985) has sketched the development, from the Reformation to Wesley, of the understanding of the role played by the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Whereas for Luther the prime role was of illuminator of Scripture, Calvin added the notion of sanctification, and the Anabaptists obedience. Pietism added the notion of the witness of the Spirit to one's personal experience of Christ - this was later rediscovered by the Methodists, and formed the basis of Christian evangelical expansion in the 18th and 19th centuries (:21-22).

Pentecostalism has added to these basics in a number of crucial ways. The manner in which God is understood to be active among His people, and in history, is via the Holy Spirit. The ongoing history of God is mediated by the Spirit of God. As the record given us by Luke in Acts would lack content if the Holy Spirit were removed from the story, so the history of God could not be understood to be continuing without the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the Pentecostal believer is made part of this story by a personal experience of the Holy Spirit. As McKay (1994:19) testifies, the Biblical drama becomes one's own story. No longer a spectator or critic, by means of a powerful life-changing encounter with the Spirit of Christ one has been enlisted into the cast, and given a role in the plot. And a crucial part of the plot involves the continuing self-revelation of God by means of the Spirit - dreams, visions, prophecy, etc. are interwoven into the story, directing and affecting the outcome.[49]

In the light of these crucial aspects of the Spirit's work, the notion of illumination, as traditionally understood by Protestant theology, does seem (in Thomas's words), rather tame. In fact, it is inconceivable that a movement that has relied so thoroughly upon the sovereign work of the Spirit to bring it into being, commission and empower its members, and lead them so directly in so many manners and to so many ends, could assign anything other than a crucial role to the Holy Spirit in the process of making understood what the Scriptures mean.[50] Neither is the context of this illumination limited to the pentecostal Bible-reader or -student: it extends to those who hear preaching of the Scriptures by those who are filled with the Spirit. Speaking of preaching in the pentecostal context, Yim states:

> No measure of worldly wisdom or human personality can duplicate the life-changing action of preaching. This is due to the presence of Biblical knowledge in the preaching situation. A product of the interchange between God's word and the Holy Spirit,

> Biblical knowledge functions to set people free. ... the preacher's task is to communicate God's word in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God.
>
> (Yim 1985:81)

Yet Arrington (1994:104ff) notes that, while the Spirit is indispensable to a pentecostal process of interpretation, 'rarely are the specifics of this role explained.' (:104) He offers the following suggestions that might help define the process: submission of the mind, with its critical and analytical capabilities; genuine openness to the witness of the Spirit while examining the text; personal experience of faith as part of the entire interpretative process; and response to the transforming call of God's word (:105). He concludes:

> The Holy Spirit has a fundamental role in the reading and interpreting of biblical texts. No one but the Holy Spirit provides the bridge that enable the ancient author and modern interpreter to meet and to span the historical and cultural gulf between them. The heart of the biblical text remains ambiguous until it is illuminated by the Holy Spirit.
>
> (Arrington 1994:105)

Recent emphasis upon the crucial emphasis placed upon the 'affections' in pentecostal life have also highlighted the role of the Holy Spirit in interpreting and applying the Scriptures. This notion is basic to both Moore's (1995) and McQueen's (1995) apprehension of the relevance of portions of the Old Testament for themselves and for pentecostals in general. Baker's prime interest is in developing a *model* for Bible reading that will allow an affective response as well as a cognitive, and he chooses to do this in terms of Iser's reader-response theory (where the text is itself the evoker of such a response). However, acknowledging a weakness in either Iser's model (or in his own understanding of it) as far as determining the dynamics at work in reader-*transformation*, he turns in his conclusion to the crucial referential value of the Biblical text, and affirms the role of the Holy Spirit in making the content of the text understandable:

> Clearly the Scriptures are special texts, having been inspired by the Holy Spirit. Truly to *understand* the message of biblical texts, one must submit to the Spirit who breathed the Scriptures and indwells the reading-process. A reading strategy that coheres with and is informed by Pentecostal spirituality is a treasure that Pentecostal scholars can offer the church and its scribes.
>
> (Baker 1995:47-48)

Baker has described what might well be a real limit in pentecostal theologising: how to define, or develop models for understanding, the role of the sovereign and free Spirit of God. Like the wind of John 3, the Spirit blows as he wills. Paul does not scruple to link the activity of the Spirit to that which supersedes human logic and comprehension (1 Cor 2:4, 9-10; Rm 11:33-36), and in this he stands in a long tradition of poets and prophets (e g Is 55:8-9). Perhaps this is why so much discussion of illumination always appears to remain vague, since to become precise and specific in this matter is to deny, by implication, the true nature, role and power of the Holy Spirit.[51] However, if there is a group of scholars who *are* well situated (in terms of experience and commitment) to make just such an attempt at expressing what appears inexpressible, it may well be pentecostals.

5.6 Some recent tentative proposals for a pentecostal hermeneutic

Before proceeding to an attempt at defining a viable pentecostal hermeneutic, some of the more recent suggestions of how a pentecostal hermeneutic could operate are noted. The choice here of these very recent contributions excludes any that suggest (overtly at least) that pentecostals 'borrow' from post-modernism, from the contextual theologies, from the faith movement, or from evangelicalism. Although passing mention has been made above to some of their proposals, they are included here as a summary and discussion of their entirety, for the sake of coherence.

5.6.1 A. Autry

Autry (1993) takes note of the proliferation of hermeneutical methods currently being propounded in theological circles (:29), and sees the most relevant tension developing between proponents of the 'correct' reading of the text versus those who argue for a more 'creative' reading (:30). He hopes to show by his own proposed framework that the tension is not absolute, commenting:

> Of the various hermeneutical approaches being promoted today, none is without value since each contributes something worthwhile to our understanding of the Bible or at least to our understanding of how understanding occurs (and thus to our understanding of ourselves). On the other hand, the proliferation of methodologies, all of which presumably meet some need, would seem to preclude exaggerated claims of exclusive adequacy for any one methodology. What is being proposed here is not a methodology as such but a theory of hermeneutics which recognises the need for judicious use of a variety of methodologies within a basic framework.
>
> The basic framework or theory should include, in their appropriate interdependence, the following five dimensions: history, language, existence in time, transcendence and community.
>
> (Autry 1993:31)

With regard to the first dimension (*history*), Autry notes that not only is Christianity essentially based upon specific acts and events in history, but that 'all attempts to understand the message of the Bible ..... in an ahistorical sense have resulted and must result in fundamental misunderstanding' (:33).

Concerning the next dimension (*language*) Autry comments upon the intense interest in contemporary hermeneutical theory in language as an event and a communications medium (:34). However, the major issue under this heading appears to be the question of whether establishing the intent of the author should be the primary interest of translation and interpretation of biblical texts. Pointing out that the human reader brings his own world of presuppositions to the text, and thus may only partially understand the author's actual intent, Autry (:35-36) agrees with Carson (1980:15) that partial knowledge is not necessarily false knowledge.

In this context Autry acknowledges that even adequate attempts to establish the author's intent within its historical context may limit the intention of Scripture itself. His major problem with a position that insists on such a limitation is the use made of the Old Testament by the New. He therefore leans toward a Ricoeurian answer to this dilemma:

> If the 'world' of the biblical text can be taken as the objective reality of the revelatory events and experiences of God reported in the Scripture, Ricoeur's suggestion can be

> helpful in directing our attention to the true aim of Scripture, which is not simply accurate reading of the author's intention but knowledge of God.
>
> (Autry 1993:36)[52]

Autry indicates that the best approach would be to ensure that any wider meaning than the intent of the author should still only be endeavoured on the basis of what the author intended, lest 'we are back in the same ahistorical limbo and biblically deficient understanding of faith which was embraced by Gnostics and rightly rejected by the church' (:37).

With regard to the dimension which he calls *existence in time*, Autry finds it importance that the existence of the present-day reader in his or her own temporal context, as well as their distance from the author in terms of time, be sufficiently recognised in the hermeneutical process. Part of the process of understanding a text must then include a pre-understanding of who *I* am now. This interest means the hermeneute will embrace gladly the relevant findings of fields such as psychology, physiology, history, political science, sociology and anthropology (:38-40). This proposal implies a corrective for pentecostals against both anti-intellectualism and the absolutisation of one's own opinion. Autry sums up his concern with the difference between existence in time *now* and existence in time *then* thus: 'Alongside the historicity of revelation (then), we must place the historicity of understanding (now)' (:41).

In dealing with *transcendence* as the fourth dimension of his proposed framework, Autry rejects any tyranny of religious experience as a prerequisite for the practice of hermeneutics (:41). In so doing he initially appears to be rejecting the claims of those such as McKay (1994), who maintain that they understand the Bible in a totally different way now that they have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, although it soon becomes clear that this is not his intention. Autry prefers to speak of an 'openness to transcendence' a phrase borrowed from Stuhlmacher. This is a prerequisite which can be 'deliberately adopted by any interpreter' (Autry 1993:41). Autry understands by this an openness to the existence and activity of God, which goes beyond attempting to discover the meaning of the author, and extends to discovering more about God, achieving knowledge of God. He describes the Bible as 'map', not 'territory' (:43): by this analogy he hopes to open up, by means of the biblical content, an

encounter with God which goes beyond 'fusion of horizons' to the place where

> ... the God of the Bible can become my God. This introduces not merely (although it includes) a cognitive adjustment but also a new dynamic to life - a shared life. What occurs is not simply a matching of patterns - my thoughts or my life to those of the Bible - but a personal presence opening up new possibilities and realities within my life, the life of the church, and the life of the world.
>
> (Autry 1993:43)

He adds:

> Experiences of encounter with transcendence, then, cannot be made prerequisites for biblical hermeneutics, but they must be seen as the goal of hermeneutics..... To make experience of God a hermeneutical goal .... is to take seriously God's intention as declared in the Bible: 'I will be your God, and you will be my people'.
>
> (:44)

The final dimension of Autry's framework is that of *community*. He argues that this dimension emphasises at least two values: that private interpretation of Scripture cannot ignore the understanding and needs of others; and that interpretation of the Bible is as much a community task as is edification, obedience and growth (:45). While every believer has the right to determine the meaning of Scripture for themselves, they would be short-sighted not to recognise the finitude of their own position, and seek the enlightening and corroborating insights of others. Autry deplores the devaluation of the role of the community, and its historical continuity, not only in existentialist hermeneutics, but also in some evangelical methodologies (:46).

Finally, Autry takes cognisance that Thiselton scarcely takes into consideration the transcendental dimension in his notion of fusion of horizons (Autry 1993:50, referring to Thiselton 1980, and 1992). This may perhaps be an area of significant contribution by the pentecostal movement to hermeneutics - that the interpreter take the God of the Bible seriously, and that the intention of that God in offering himself to the interpreter not be ignored.

Autry makes a number of contributions that may be crucial to pentecostal hermeneutics. He is prepared to identify the ethos and values of pentecostalism, and on this basis to posit a theoretical framework in which exegesis can take place. This is recognition that a pentecostal

hermeneutic may be credible or viable only in a pentecostal context, and that only a pentecostal hermeneutic which is consist with such ethos and values might be a viable hermeneutic for the movement. This is also implies a reticence about 'method', since the exegetical process can be guided by insights rather than prescribed to by a specific method. 'Values' and 'dimensions' (Jeanrond?) can then replace 'steps' in interpretation. His criticism of Ricouer also indicates the dangers of an ahistorical approach to the Scriptures, since pentecostalism is at heart an historically aware movement (a people involved in the ongoing history of God), even if not always sophisticated in their understanding of philosophies of history. Finally, his emphasis on transcendence as a goal in hermeneutics and not just a presupposition highlights the teleological emphasis in pentecostalism, a sense of purpose that pervades pentecostal ministry, including its exegesis.

5.6.2 J. C. Thomas

Mention has been made above to some of Thomas' contributions to the hermeneutical debate within Pentecostalism.[53] The following is therefore a rather brief summary of the interpretive process he proposes in one article.

Thomas (1994) addresses the debate from the perspective of women's ministry in the church. On the basis of the way Scripture was interpreted at the Apostolic Council (Acts 15), he argues that a similar approach might well be more affirmative than some of the more traditional evangelical approaches. This Council had been faced with the vexing question of how Gentiles could be fully admitted into the *ekklesia* without their conforming to Jewish customs and laws. Thomas claims the process of dealing with the problem highlights three specific elements which influenced their decision, namely:

i) The *type of community* in which the problem arises;

ii) The work of the *Holy Spirit*;

iii) The role of the *Scriptures*.

Thomas maintains that the early Christian community approached the problem from their experience and testimony as a *community*. It was not a matter of individual (private) interpretation, but demanded the consensus of the charismatic body of believers (Ac 15:25,28. Paul appeals to this illuminated communal sense of 'rightness' in I Cor 14:36-38). They also approached it from the point of view of what the *Spirit* was already doing - there was ample testimony that the Spirit was leading apostles to the Gentiles, and that the Gentile converts were enjoying the fullness of the Spirit despite their status as aliens to the covenants of Israel. Further, they approached the ambivalence on the issue *in the Scriptures* in the light of what was happening. The positive affirmations in the Old Testament of Gentile inclusion in the covenants and blessings of Israel were thus granted greater force than the more negative (apparent) denials.

Thomas maintains that a similar interpretive process in the context of the present-day Pentecostal community would support access to and recognition in all aspects of Pentecostal ministry for *women*. It would then have to be decision of the community itself, which after all recognises Spirit-filled ministry when it sees it. It would also have to be taken in the light of what the Spirit is actually doing: is He calling and equipping women for Pentecostal ministry? And in the light of this, can the Scriptures be seen in an affirming light concerning this issue, or must the few apparent denials (e g 1 Tim 2) be granted the power of an absolute veto?

Although Thomas appears to wish to propound such a process as an alternative to the historical-literal process inherited from evangelicalism, it could equally probably be maintained that it is in fact the *ultimate* historical-literal approach to Scripture - one that recognises that the Spirit and the charismatic community are seen in Scripture itself to have an ongoing role in the processes of history, and in their interpretation for the present-day church.

It is also not clear that in Acts 15 Luke is describing an interpretative process in which Scripture is *not* primary. Although the wording of the final pronouncement stresses the role of the Holy Spirit, the space given in James' speech to Scripture is indicative of its importance in and to the debate. This is in line with the role ascribed to Scripture in most of the speeches in Acts, as well as in the description of Paul's ministry in the synagogues of the Dispersion.

Cartledge (1996) sees the role of the Holy Spirit in charismatic ministry as both *innovative* (the sovereign Spirit) and *consistent* (with the Scriptures and with what as been previously done by the Spirit). It is not clear that Thomas shares this insight, in that the activity of the Spirit appears to have been given primacy by him, almost as though there were a possibility that it might be at odds with the Scriptures. Clark 1995a is an attempt to show how a consistent exegetical approach to the New Testament can affirm the validity of women's ministry at all levels in a New Testament community.

5.6.3 G. Sheppard

Sheppard has consistently argued for a departure from the tyranny of dispensationalist-fundamentalist methodology which appears to have so strongly affected North American pentecostalism since the middle of this century. This is the major plea of his 1984 article in *Pneuma*, and is the basis of his comments in the same journal on the current debate a decade later.

His central thesis is that the pentecostal movement arose in a milieu which was not participant in the modernist-fundamentalist debate. The terms 'precritical', 'uncritical' or 'first naivete' therefore hardly apply (Sheppard 1994:126).

> Using an insight from James Washington's study of African-American churches, I would, at the outset, prefer to call the classical Pentecostal heritage 'submodern' rather than 'premodern' or 'precritical'. Most older Pentecostals were acclimated to cultural values of the lower classes or to racially marginalised groups, and were not invited as equal partners into the modernist debate. Still, they all ate from the crumbs that fell beneath the table at the banquet of modernity.
>
> (Sheppard 1994:127)

On the basis of Gunkel's views on folk-tales of a century ago, Sheppard argues:

> His (Gunkel's) 'aesthetic criticism' of high and serious folklore from premodern times ought to suggest a similar need for sophistication in anthropological and theological descriptions of preaching, prophecy, ritual and music in submodern Pentecostal

churches.

(Sheppard 1994:127)[54]

Sheppard has here made a number of significant contributions to the discussion on pentecostal hermeneutics, particularly in recognising the cultural and geographic diversity within the movement. Beyond the divergences between Euro- and Afro-original approaches, if one includes the Latin American, Southern Asian and Pacific cultural backgrounds in the scope of pentecostal hermeneutical research, Sheppard's concerns become even more relevant. It may well be asked whether there has not developed (in practice at least) a pentecostal hermeneutic which both transcends all these cultural boundaries and also challenges the very Euro-centric categories so often used by Western scholars in the debate[55]. The problem, in Africa at least, is that such practice has yet to be articulated in a manner considered credible by Western scholars. It is to their credit that the theologies of liberation and revolution have taken the distinctiveness of such cultures seriously, and been prepared to confront what often appears to be a tyranny of the eurocentric paradigm. How such a critical approach can be best utilised in pentecostal scholarship has yet to be demonstrated.[56]

However, emphasising divergent cultural roots and expressions in the pentecostal movement is itself not without challenging implications. It is a fact that much of the most recent wave of occultism and New Age mysticism includes a 'rediscovery' of, and return to, the spiritual values of many premodern cultures. Conversion to pentecostal Christianity should thus always be seen and offered as a real and radical alternative to those aspects of non-Western cultures. It is challenging that an influential scholar such as Hollenweger appears to romanticise tribal African medicine and spirituality and to condemn what he considers to be the 'colonial evangelism' of missionaries such as David Livingstone (Hollenweger 1995:107-110). His article does not take cognisance of the fact that the alternative spirituality and 'health care' he refers to often involves such unacceptable practices as female circumcision, the infamous '*muti* (medicine) murders' (which have made such a strong resurgence in South Africa recently), and shamanistic techniques which involve divination and induce possession by so-called 'ancestor'-spirits.[57]

Anthropologists investigating the effect of the burgeoning pentecostal movement in Central American and Caribbean society described it as a force which facilitated both *modernisation* and *Westernisation* - both in movements with a strong North American missionary element and in those with more indigenous roots (Manning 1980; Wedenoja 1980).[58] This is probably because pentecostalism, like the Reformation in Europe, promotes a move away from that form of superstition and fear in which occult forces dominate human reasoning and the daily experiences of life.[59]

Sheppard's insights challenge pentecostal theological formulation in a number of areas. They question not only the relevance to wider pentecostalism of the *North American* pentecostal affinity to evangelicalism, but also imply that pentecostal attempts at self-understanding that utilise and relate to *European* philosophical history and categories may not always be useful to the movement. It is obvious that a lot of input needs to be acquired from the 2/3 world of pentecostalism. However, if it is insisted that this input be patterned and packaged in traditional North Atlantic academic forms and categories (academic articles, theses, etc) then the 2/3 world is at a distinct disadvantage. If, however, the primacy of orality in that world is acknowledged, then perhaps events such as the Pentecostal World Conference (if they represented world pentecostalism) might be understood as truly theological events, with or without an academic stream. A gathering of pentecostals from around the world, with its oral and liturgical forms of communication, might provide insights into the ethos and theology of pentecostalism that could be missed in traditional Western theological forms of discussion.

5.6.4 R.D. Moore and L.R. Mcqueen

Although both of these scholars have made studies of Old Testament texts (Deuteronomy and Joel respectively), both have done so from a particularly pentecostal perspective, McQueen in particular relating his work to the appropriation of those texts by the New Testament church and the pentecostal movement.

Moore (1995:12-23) relates at length his own theological odyssey with respect to Biblical

studies, recounting his tentative and timid beginnings as a student from a marginal group, and his development to a position where he came to realise that his pentecostal insights were in no way inferior to alternative presuppositions held by his teachers. He attempts to establish what he calls a 'critical charismatic' approach to Deuteronomy, a literary approach which takes as the central theme of the book 'the fire of God'. This approach is a 'voice from the margin' which relates to the marginal aspects of the work itself (:11-12). In contrast to a literary reading of Deuteronomy that sees the death of Moses as the central theme of the work (:23-28), Moore offers an alternative analysis of the structure of the work that suggests that its prime concern is to reassert the centrality of the fire at Horeb for the people's relationship with Yahweh (:28-29); and that secondly it aims to rekindle that fire among the people in their present situation, a generation later (:30ff). Moore offers his own pentecostal experience as a valid paradigm for approaching Deuteronomy and reaching his conclusion, noting that, if he appears to have given a rather large role to his personal experience, 'would not the pronounced lack of attention to the Horeb theophany in Deuteronomy scholarship render the latter at least equally open to the criticism of having read the book through its own experience or lack thereof?' (:33).

Relevant to the discussion of a pentecostal hermeneutic is Moore's concluding comments concerning the 'marginality' of the pentecostal approach. God's voice has often been a voice from the margin, as it was in the wilderness of Horeb, the upper room at Pentecost, the warehouse at Azusa Street. This puts marginal voices in a new light - Moore refers specifically to the voices of widows, orphans and aliens (:33). A pentecostal approach to Deuteronomy (and by implication any text in Scripture), is open to the 'otherness' of the speaking of God, since it arises from personal experience of that otherness.

Moore affirms the status of the pentecostal movement as a radical alternative movement, in terms of its experience, its approach to the Scripture, and its evaluation of society. It is by implication a non-conformist movement, since it attributes value to those things that appear to be marginal in terms of the consensus values of secular society, but become the central issue when one truly encounters God.

McQueen (1995) states that his approach to a pentecostal understanding of Joel is based upon a specifically pentecostal hermeneutic. He maintains that this implies three major considerations (:15): that Joel is approached with a 'distinctive Pentecostal experiential pre-understanding'; that Joel is approached in terms of not only its literary and historical significance, but also of its character as the living word of God; and that the interpretation of one scholar gains its significance only in the context of the wider Christian community. 'This study may be viewed, therefore, as one attempt to hear the voice of God through the text of Joel and to witness to that voice for the sake of a deeper communal knowing of the God who has the final word.' (:16) McQueen terms this method ('such interpretive hearing and speaking') a *prophetic hermeneutic* (:16).

Since this study is concerned primarily with the hermeneutical issues and not with the detail of any particular exegetical process, McQueen's arguments and findings with regard to Joel are too detailed to be reflected here. He discusses at length how Joel was appropriated by various New Testament authors, and how the Pentecostal movement made use of the work. However, much of this discussion belongs primarily in the area of interest of Old Testament studies.[60] McQueen chooses to apply his findings as implications for the *revisioning of pentecostal spirituality and theological articulation* (:93ff). In other words, a pentecostal reading of Joel, and the history of its interpretation in Former Rain (1st century) and Latter Rain (20th century) pentecostal Christianity, has theological and experiential implications for the contemporary movement. He identifies the major 'movements' of the prophet Joel as being lament, salvation and judgement. These movements are relevant to North American pentecostalism (:91), which he maintains finds itself at the crossroads. The choice lies between assimilation into evangelicalism, or a return to the initial pentecostal vision (:93)[61] The threefold movement in Joel implies that pentecostalism needs to return to an eschatological orientation in its theological ethos (:95ff). The theme of *lament* affirms this, articulating the personal experience of eschatological tension felt by pentecostal believers (:97ff). The prophetic community brought into being at Pentecost appropriates the movement of *salvation* (:99ff), and the contemporary pentecostal movement needs to rediscover itself as a prophetic community that is *in* the world but not *of* it, thereby holding out hope of God's eschatological salvation within the world. The theme of *judgement* can be appropriated by contemporary

pentecost in terms of the way it orders its own community, and in terms of what it represents to the world as the righteousness of God (:104ff).

McQueen concludes (:107ff) that the implications of his reading of Joel for pentecostal hermeneutics includes the following: in agreement with Brueggeman (1991), he supports the legitimacy of a sectarian hermeneutic, i e he agrees that a 'general hermeneutic' cannot do the justice to the text of the Old Testament that a reading in communal context can; he maintains with Sheppard (1994) that there is more than the dynamic between text and reader involved in pentecostal Bible interpretation; and that the 'claim of the text' (although never contrary to the Spirit) cannot be known and experienced until the reader has been claimed by the Spirit (McQueen 1995:109).

McQueen notes two implications of applying his model of prophetic hermeneutics. The first is that no methodology is ever value-free, and that there must be correspondence between form and content. This implies that a '... hermeneutic which embraces the critical claim of the Spirit simply cannot be fitted into a methodology which allows reason to be the final arbiter of truth.' (:112). The second is that such a reading of the Biblical text cannot be considered to make absolute claims about it: '... text, reader, and Spirit are involved together in an ongoing hermeneutical dialogue.' (:112) This dialogue is continuing and open, subject to the eschatological tension inherent in 'knowing in part'.

Like Moore with Deuteronomy, McQueen's pentecostal appropriation of Joel, implies statements about the text, about pentecostal experience and community, and about method. Both studies are attempts to re-establish (or re-vision) pentecostalism in terms of its own peculiar ethos, an ethos which it is not inconsistent with their claims to describe as a radical, alternative, witnessing, discipleship movement.[62]

5.6.5 M. Cartledge

Cartledge (1996) discusses the possibility of utilising an empirical theology which can address the requirements of the charismatic movement in terms of its hermeneutics. He contrasts the

development of such a model of theology from an *evangelical* perspective with an extant model which is constructed according to a communicative approach in a *liberation-theology* paradigm.[63] Building upon the proposals of Thiselton (1992) concerning a pastoral theological hermeneutic (Cartledge 1996:117-118), and N T Wright's (1991) suggestions concerning innovation and consistency (Cartledge 1996:119-121), he propounds an approach to the Bible which would incorporate and illustrate these principles of innovation and consistency. Cartledge then tentatively applies this method of reading ('through the lens of "consistency and innovation" ' - p 121) to the paraclete-sayings of Jesus in John's gospel (:121ff). The principle of consistency is related to the content of the text of Scripture, while the principle of innovation is related to the free working of the sovereign Spirit of God.[64]

An evangelical-charismatic hermeneutic applied by those interested in an empirical theology could be demonstrated by evaluating e g the 'Toronto Blessing' (:125-126). The empirical part of the task is the utilisation of the insights ('limited but important') gained from the sociological, psychological and physiological perspectives upon the phenomenon. Cartledge maintains:

> However, it seems that the key questions hermeneutically are related to the dialectic of innovation and consistency. Is what we are witnessing consistent with the authoritative text of Scripture? Or is it a form of innovation more consistent with the spirit of the age than the Spirit of Truth? How we answer these questions will, of course, depend upon a number of factors... an empirical theology within this hermeneutic will want to know what exactly is happening empirically, that is in terms of the faith and practice of people in the life-world concerned. This will be measured against the trans-contextual system of the Bible in order to measure consistency and innovation. Both are required if the particular case in point is judged to be authentically Christian, that is in terms of both Word and Spirit.
>
> (Cartledge 1996:125-126)

Cartledge's proposal would allow a charismatic hermeneutic to be both critical (testing findings against the ethos and background of Scripture) and open and fresh (acknowledging the freedom and innovation of the Spirit of God). Such an approach to the Scriptures is instructive for a search for a pentecostal hermeneutic, which is based upon a descriptive task (highlighting what the Spirit *does* in pentecostalism) and a prescriptive task (defining the boundaries required to

be consistent with Scriptural tradition). Cartledge has opened a area of thought which offers scope for deeper investigation. If pentecostals seek a hermeneutic in which Scripture and Spirit are not played off against one another, in which neither is primary and neither is limited, then this notion of consistency and innovation appears to offer hope. The effect (teleology leading to realisation of the truth contained in the text) of interpretations of the text should then be tested empirically, viz in the faith and practice of the people. Where (what is claimed to be) the sovereign action of the Spirit is consistent with the content of the text of Scripture, one might expect to find a distinctive phenomenology. Thus it is both innovative and consistent with Scripture to experience the Spirit with an associated phenomenology that includes tongues, prophecy and healings. The same is not necessarily true where the phenomenolgy includes ecstatic manifestations such as uncontrollable laughter..

5.7 A proposed model for a relevant pentecostal hermeneutic

In the light of all the above considerations, the following is a tentative proposal for a pentecostal hermeneutic which can be applied to the New Testament text. It is not offered as definitive, but as a serious proposal that might be added to or built upon in the future. It is offered under three headings: philosophy, process (application) and practice.

5.7.1 The philosophy of a viable pentecostal hermeneutic

The following elements of a hermeneutical philosophy for the pentecostal community are emphasised:

5.6.1.1 An holistic approach to the Scriptures, and the New Testament in particular

The Bible is taken seriously by the pentecostal movement. It is understood in its entirety as the oracle of God. Although the diversity of human authors is recognised, this does not imply a

fragmentation of the canon, as though eg. Paul and John were at odds, or were dealing with totally different subject matter and concerns from totally diverse viewpoints. In inductive studies, this means that research into e g the nature of faith in the New Testament will not restrict itself purely or primarily to a single author (e g Paul or Mark), but will seek the truth in a synthesis of the teachings of all New Testament authors. For pentecostals this would be especially true when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is being examined.

A corollary of this is that the pentecostal movement agrees with evangelical apologetes such as Josh McDowell[65] (and scholars such as Carson 1983 and Dunn 1990) that there is such a thing as a biblical world-view. This need not necessarily be the same thing as the world-view, particularly the uninformed physical cosmology, of its several authors. The biblical world-view might be loosely termed 'the mind of God'. The Bible is thus taken seriously as *revelation*, as communication of data from God to human beings. It gives God's point of view on the material questions challenging the human race, and indicates the pathway to the approval of God. It is thus meaningful for exegetes to bring their own lives into line with the values expressed in the Scriptures, and to take seriously the God of the Scriptures, including that God's invitation to themselves to enter into a meaningful relationship with the deity.

5.7.1.2 A sense of historical continuity with the biblical people of God

This refers most particularly to the pentecostal sense of continuity with the New Testament community. Although the community of Acts was inaugural and therefore had certain experiences which are not necessarily repeatable today, pentecostals consider them essentially to have been the same people of God that believers are today. Although the 20th century generation does not aspire to the once-for-all apostolic authority of the 'eye-witness' generation, the power, works and character of that generation need not be alien to Christianity now. Since the heart of the Christian witness is understood to have centred on personal encounter with the resurrected Christ, the New Testament is seen not primarily as a source-book of the beliefs and doctrine of the earliest church, but of forms, values and content in the encounter with that Christ. The New Testament witness is to a saving, healing, sanctifying,

Spirit-baptising and coming King, who may be encountered in the same way and power today as then. A holistic approach to the Scripture guarantees its authority to answer the 'why' and 'what' questions directed toward it: the sense of historical continuity in the pentecostal community guarantees its authority to answer the 'how' questions, too. In the encounter with the living Christ, the only limits placed on the two parties to the encounter (God and human beings) and on the potential of the encounter, are those of the text itself. Any alienation from that earliest community's conceptuality, inevitably brought about by time and the historical process, is insufficient reason to abandon the expectation that that to which the text witnesses should be realised today.[66]

This emphasis ensures that history as history is taken seriously by a pentecostal hermeneutic. If this age's community can share in the experience and power of that of the first century, than it is not irrelevant to enquire what actually happened then, nor what they sought to uphold and propagate in their more epistolary writings. Correlation between then and now must be both adequate and accurate. However, it is evident that it will not be facile. Identification is not total, and should be considered in the light of the many real and challenging discontinuities between the New Testament era and the late twentieth century. In essence, pentecostals strive for closer identification with the Person propagated by the early church community, as attested by the text they have left. Commonality is thus a commonality of discipleship and experience rather than of purely historical coincidence.

Arguing for a fundamentally different way for pentecostals to do theology, compared to non-pentecostals, Ellington (1996:38) says: 'Pentecostal theology and hermeneutics are different because they arise not primarily out of rational reflection, but rather out of lived experience.' This leads to the situation where testimony is crucial in pentecostal circles, and basic (on the ground) pentecostal theology is descriptive and oral. Sense of historical continuity with the biblical people of God issues in a way of doing theology, including hermeneutics, that emphasises the immediacy of God among his people, and culminates in an immediate theology and relationship to the Scriptures that finds expression in narrative, i e testimony. A number of recent contributions to pentecostal hermeneutics has included the element of testimony in the hermeneutical process, e g Moore (1995) allocating the larger part of an article to it (pp

12-23), and McQueen (1995) making much of the realisation of the message of Joel (in terms of lament in particular) in his own interpretation of that work. Autry (1993:40) notes: 'Quite apart from self-consciously seeing myself as an interpreter within a hermeneutical tradition, I need even more importantly to see myself and my story as part of a greater, continuing story of God's people. Part of that greater story was the giving of God's word.'

5.7.1.3 The context of the charismatic community

Pentecostal interpretation of Scripture is done within the context of a charismatic community. The difference between such a community and the non-charismatic sort is considerable, probably as significant as (although not necessarily identical to) the difference between the radical Reformers and the classical. A charismatic community presupposes charismatic individuals, so that the text is approached in a charismatic context at all times. The role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretive process is thus not limited merely to 'illumination', but is also relevant in leading, discernment, witness and demonstration. The interpreter must be as relevant as the process of interpretation, i e a participator in the ministry of the Holy Spirit as he guides, grants discernment, etc.[67] The community which provides both the filter and the criteria for evaluation of the interpretation,[68] must be charismatic, i e acquainted with the powerful presence and working of God in their midst. It will be both an example of the type of interpretation which is possible, relevant and effectual, and an exegetical community which is itself interested in the meaning of the text. It will both search the Scriptures, and inspire its members to do the same for themselves. Historical continuity with the first century church is a charismatic continuity as well.[69]

The importance of this perspective for pentecostal hermeneutics cannot be over-emphasised. It implies criticism (in the sense that such interpretation may be less than adequate in its breadth) of all biblical interpretation done in a non-charismatic context, an assertion which recognises that accusations of 'gnosticism' will probably always be levelled against pentecostals.[70] However, the potential for gross misunderstanding or manipulation of the text is greater in proportion to the discrepancy between the realms of experience of the originating

and interpreting communities. Yoder's criticism, from a radical Reformation point of view, of attempts to formulate pastoral theology from the New Testament in the context of an established historical church, are valid here (Yoder 1985:114-115). Such a difference (as described by Yoder) between the concerns of an established church versus those of a minority missionary movement, imply a similarly significant difference between the interpretation made in a charismatic community and that made in a community in which charismatic phenomena are rare or resisted.

Obviously pentecostals cannot (and, generally speaking, have no desire to) work in total isolation from the larger church community. The so-called 'analogy of the church' will always be relevant to pentecostal hermeneutics, in the sense that any pentecostal finding which is at odds with the larger church consensus would be subjected to critical scrutiny within the movement. Where pentecostals have good reason to believe that their exegesis makes better sense than such a consensus, as for instance in the tongues debate, they will normally insist on a distinctive understanding of the text. However, other issues such as deviations from the trinitarian formulae, or the teachings of the Kenyonites concerning the 'spiritual death of Jesus', have led to intense deliberation among many pentecostals and charismatics, and to a wide (but not absolute) consensus that such deviations cannot be maintained on biblical grounds. There is not, and certainly should not be, anything inherently *cultic* in pentecostalism.

It must be recognised that the community under discussion here is expected to be *charismatic*, and that this does not imply other demands upon it, such as being Western, white, educated, etc. A charismatic community is one in which the crucified and resurrected Christ is seen (by means of discernible phenomena such as the gifts of the Spirit) to be dynamically and immediately present among his disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit.[71] The demand to be charismatic is thus not a demand for cultural conformity. Obviously such a community will differ from its co-cultural peer communities in numerous respects, e g charismatic Indians may exist within a Hindu community, share many of the cultural insights and accommodations of a society which has developed largely within a Hindu paradigm, and yet be a Christian confrontation of and witness to their Hindu peers. They are no less a charismatic community because they are not Westernised in every respect. In so far as Western culture has roots in the

biblical values asserted in 16th century Europe, however, there will always be some elements of what appears to be Westernisation implicit in Christian conversion.

The notion of a pentecostal community cannot simply be derived from what pentecostals have been and are as a community. Addressing particularly the North American pentecostal context, both Stronstad and McQueen argue for an alternative view of pentecostal community by pentecostals themselves. Stronstad (1997) maintains that pentecostals in the 20th century have never really seen themselves as a community of *prophets* (as Luke describes the first-century church), but have tended to identify themselves in terms of 'secondary terminology' such as *baptized with the Spirit*, *initial evidence*, etc. This means that they have not fulfilled the potential of a charismatic community of prophets to challenge the church, or society; they have appropriated the gift of the Spirit in a selfish and narcissistic manner; they have trivialized both the phenomenon of prophecy and its content; and they have allowed the phenomenon to split and fracture the community (:75-77). Stronstad believes that the presence of the Holy Spirit and the charismata among pentecostals could have achieved far more in the sense of inspiring them as a radical alternative community than has been the case.

McQueen (1995) argues for the pentecostal movement 'revisioning' itself as an eschatological community. Linking up with a number of pentecostals who have discerned this need (:93-95), he notes: '... these voices are calling Pentecostalism to an assessment of losses and a revitalization of some initial characteristics.' (:95) He considers the eschatological perspective in the earlier pentecostal communities to have been driven by the Spirit:

> I am suggesting that Pentecostal spirituality drives its eschatology, for it was the outpouring of the Spirit which signalized the *beginning* of the last days for the early church as well as the *end* of the last days for the early Pentecostals. Pentecostal eschatology finds its source in the presence of the eschatological Spirit. I suggest, therefore, that the waning of eschatological expectation in North American Pentecostalism derives from a loss of the Spirit in the churches. The Spirit has been quenched through cultural, moral, institutional, and theological accommodation. The Spirit has become a domesticated helper who moves only within prescribed forms and at convenient occasions.
>
> (McQueen 1995:97)[72]

He then proceeds to indicate how the rediscovery of lament, and the rediscovery of the role

of the prophetic community as a sign of salvation and judgement, could revitalise the pentecostal community. McQueen's work is an indication of the primitivist principle in pentecostalism, in which a sincere desire to be linked to the dynamics of the earliest church is allied and parallel to a late-twentieth century desire to rediscover the dynamic of the early-twentieth century pentecostal movement.[73]

Sheppard (1994;139-140) notes the seeming ambivalence in pentecostal community between 'hurrying and waiting', which '... tension in Acts plays an important role in Pentecostal self-understanding of life in this world. It helps explain the Pentecostal tendency to err on the side of the radical reformation and to have deep suspicions about liberal political programs.' (:140) After noting Barth's tendency (perhaps under influence of the Blumhardts) to this same notion, he says: 'Pentecostals at their best have spoken and acted prophetically, but , in all honesty, at their worst they have succumbed to a shallow apocalyptic determinism and political conservatism.' (:140)

Ellington (1996:30) maintains that the authority granted to Scripture as a rule for life '... can be adequately understood only by the community which has committed itself to live under the discipline of that authority because that authority arises from a living interaction between God and the community of faith.' The interest being shown by pentecostal scholars in the revisioning of the pentecostal movement as prophetic and eschatological community cannot proceed without continually emphasising the need for that community to also be committed to the Scriptures and their authority.[74] The radical Reformers (and their Methodist and Holiness heirs) fulfilled their prophetic role in their societies both by openness to the Spirit (in a less developed sense than in the pentecostal ethos), and in sacrificial commitment to their understanding of Scripture as a manual for discipleship of Jesus Christ. The notions of 'presence of the Spirit' and 'power of the Spirit' in the pentecostal community should not be developed apart from the notion of *commitment and obedience to Scripture*. Pentecostals can endeavour to be both 'people of the Spirit' and 'people of the Book'.

5.7.1.4 Orientation in the current hermeneutical debate

Pentecostal scholarship cannot afford to be insular or parochial. The revelation of the purpose, salvation and power of God should motivate scholarship to wider interests, not narrower. While disagreeing, perhaps even vehemently, with many of the philosophical categories and even concerns of modern and post-modern hermeneutics, pentecostals might nevertheless remain open to some of its findings. The intense interest expressed during the last few decades, in the nature of the encounter between the interpreter and a text, cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to pentecostal concerns. However, neither may the basics, such as knowledge of the original languages, thought-world, proclamation and realisation of the text, be neglected. A pentecostal hermeneutic will (indeed, *must*) challenge pentecostal anti-intellectualism. If pentecostal believers are as secure in their stance as they publicly confess, they will neither scruple nor fear to accumulate data and to hone their intellectual skills. Brash and arrogant refusal to hear what others are saying is more often a symptom of intellectual insecurity than evidence of a faith that can move mountains.

The suggestions in this study concerning the shape of a pentecostal literary theory argue that, while the interests and motives of hermeneutical philosophers and literary theorists such as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Jeanrond and Iser are acknowledged and respected within their own paradigm, they can also not be unconditionally accepted and applied. Precisely this danger will urge pentecostal scholars to acquaint themselves thoroughly with their works. A pentecostal hermeneutical philosophy will fall short of its full potential if it does not also confront its contemporaries, challenging them and driving them to re-examine some of their own findings. While the pentecostal movement is a mere cipher in Continental society and thought, the realisation of such a debate may seem highly improbable. But Continental philosophy is itself in danger of being shown to be insular and irrelevant if it does not allow itself to be challenged by the concerns and values of the single largest and most dynamic movement in contemporary Christendom, and the way it understands and implements the text of its scripture. It is a challenge to pentecostal scholarship that the peculiarly charismatic understanding of transcendence and the supernatural should not even be considered in works such as Thiselton's (1992) summary and history of hermeneutical trends. While acknowledging that contemporary

hermeneutes have not specifically attempted to address many issues which are crucial to pentecostalism (e g does God still speak?), pentecostals may in all fairness present their experience to these hermeneutes and request that it be granted some consideration in the final formulation or survey of hermeneutical philosophy.[75]

5.7.2 The process (application) of pentecostal hermeneutics

Pentecostal use of the Bible is closely linked to general pentecostal 'religious' practice. The notion (where it exists at all) of pentecostal academic scholarship for the sake of scholarship is a relatively recent development.[76] Therefore the teleology of the interpretation process is crucial.

Pentecostal interpretation could not be conceived of outside of the parameters of the pentecostal *encounter* with God. This encounter is either presupposed, or ongoing, or being propagated, or being tested and evaluated, or its implication sought and applied. In the process both God and human beings are taken seriously, since they are the parties to the encounter. The exact relationship in which it stands to the encounter between God and people will define the hermeneutical process. Not only would the different types of biblical literature call each for a distinctive approach - so too would the different purposes for which the Scriptures are approached.

Superficially, the initial *exegetical* process itself may not differ much (or at all) from the historical and grammatical approach of many evangelicals.[77] The major difference would lie in the 'why' of exegesis rather than the 'how'. This is probably why so many pentecostals are content with an evangelical hermeneutical paradigm, or, as in South Africa, with a conservative Reformed paradigm. Pentecostals stand within the mainstream of the orthodox Christian faith, in full accord with the Apostolic Creed, if they are to be evaluated solely by their doctrines. However, it is in the area of practice that the difference becomes apparent. It was precisely upon this point that du Plessis answered his questioners with the well-known 'steak on the grill' comparison (du Plessis 1977:183-184). Pentecostal exegesis may never lose

sight of the fact that it is bound to further the practice of the pentecostal movement rather than to merely affirm the major tenets of the great creeds of Christendom (which it seems to do anyway). Perhaps Hollenweger's remarks (noted earlier in this study) should be read in this context:

> The theological insights of the Pentecostal movement are neither new nor valuable. They demonstrate to the historical churches how far their preaching has become incomprehensible, and how much the religious education on which they set so much store is misinterpreted amongst lay people.
>
> (Hollenweger 1977:506)

Exposition and *experience* are thus inextricably linked in a pentecostal paradigm. Whether the intent be counselling, preaching, missions, liturgy, devotions or ethics, the process will always be informed by the purpose and need. This should not be misconstrued: the aim is not to bend the Bible to the immediate practical theological task, but to perform the task in a biblical way. The role of the narrative is to show how this way operates; the application of the realities behind the narratives will ensure that the Scriptures are offered as a confrontation and alternative to the secular status quo. Perhaps the full implications of the political theologies such as Moltmanns's (cf my conclusions in Clark 1989), or of the elenctics of missions scientist Bavinck (1960), or of the apologetics of Josh McDowell (1972 and 1975) and Francis Schaeffer (1968), or of the nouthetic counselling method of Jay Adams (1970), may be truly realised in their radical confrontational totality within a pentecostal paradigm. The investigation into the relevance of the last of these in particular, is a challenge yet to be taken up within the pentecostal community.[78]

The everyday, human experience of the reader/listener needs to be confronted by the potential and possibilities of a pentecostal encounter with God. To this end is exposition directed. The aim is to change thoughts, values, patterns of behaviour, point of personal integration, futures and priorities. There are biblical precedents for all of these. The epistolary portions of the New Testament sketch the conceptual basis and ethical implications of the encounter, but the encounter itself remains central and essential to all aspects of pentecostal practice, including the process of interpreting the text of the New Testament.

5.7.3 Practice - the eventual aim of the pentecostal hermeneutic

Pentecostalism cannot legitimately operate within a context in which 'nothing happens'. If the key to the Acts of the Apostles is Ac 1:8, so too is it to the pentecostal movement. Witness based upon δυναμις argues for activity, motion, purpose. The interpretation of Scripture in pentecostal circles should not lose contact with this dynamic. It should always be associated with practice. This is in line with the Old Testament notion of God as the God of the 'straight line', a redeeming, leading, prophet-sending and promising God who is wholly other to the cyclic gods of the surrounding nations.[79]

While this association has been linked to the process of encounter, exegesis, exposition and experience above, under this heading it is dealt with in terms of objective realisation. 'Practice' here means implementation, demonstration and realisation.

Pentecostal use of the Bible should be aimed at the *implementation* of biblical realities. Thus it could be aimed at encouraging or promoting the propagation of the gospel, the intensity of personal commitment, the occurrence of the charismatic gifts, the confrontation of anti-Christian philosophies and ideologies. Not only should it promote such activities, but it should also test and evaluate them. Herein it differs from the action-reflection method of the political theologies: reflection in pentecostal hermeneutics should be aimed at correcting not the interpretation of the text (in the sense of enquiring: did that interpretation work?), but at correcting the practice in the light of the text (does this action correspond adequately to the apparent intent of the text?). For pentecostals, the content and intent of the text is the constant, not the variable.[80]

In the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 that is attempted in the next chapter, the issue is love and the spoken charismatic gifts. A pentecostal interpretation could not aim merely at determining the intent of Paul's communication to Corinth, but must proceed to implementation: does prophecy operate in my community? Is it permeated by love? Does my community test the prophetic word against objective criteria? A 'no' answer to any of these is then a challenge to the interpreter and the interpretation: all three (at least) of these elements of 1 Corinthians 14

could be promoted by pentecostal exegesis.

Implementation should not be considered in isolation from *demonstration*. The interpretation of the text, including the way it promotes implementation, needs to be shown to be adequate and viable. The demand is not just upon the community, which as a charismatic community should excel in pentecostal manifestations anyway, but upon the interpreter. Peter's claim before the Jewish council is exemplary of the way this responsibility was taken seriously by the apostolic community: 'We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him' (Ac 5:32). The pentecostal interpreter cannot be other than serious about the linking of the Scriptures to personal practice and experience, since the most effective witness is to show practice and Scripture as interwoven: 'This is what was spoken ....' (Ac 2:16).

This raises a question which appears almost incongruous in academic discussion: must a scholarly pentecostal interpreter be personally acquainted with all of the New Testament charismata? Would not such a person be more in demand as an evangelist or apostle than as a theologian? It is clear that certain individuals experience some or many of the charismata more intensely and regularly than do others, but this does not mean that the average pentecostal could not experience most of the charismata at some time or other in their lives. Certainly any ostensibly pentecostal interpretation of the Scriptures might be lose some of its impact where the interpreter does not evidence *some* dynamic activity of the Spirit in a personal and regular way. A pentecostal hermeneute should feel most urgently the demands of a needy (and often cynical) audience: 'Show me, teacher, don't just tell me!' The exegete is not exempt from the demand to be a role-model.[81] In the context of 1 Corinthians 14, could an interpreter who never has spoken in tongues or prophesied ever hope to present an authoritative pentecostal exposition of this passage?

The final element of practice is *realisation*. Does what the text proclaims actually occur? In the context of our example, 1 Corinthians 14, does prophecy commence or increase in the listening community? What is its effect? Does it measure up to the standards of biblical prophecy? Do those who never knew of it, or thought it was not for them, find themselves

involved in the charismatic activity par excellence, for which Moses sighed, and of which the apostle says: 'You can *all* prophesy'? Interpretation without such results might be interesting, but would it be effective? This is not to fall foul of the simplisticism of pragmatism, but to recognise that as far as pentecostals are concerned, God spoke his oracles for a purpose, to achieve a certain end. The pentecostal interpretative process cannot end before that purpose is achieved: in the exegete[82] and in the hearers.

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In this chapter it has been necessary to stress one crucial element of a distinctive pentecostal hermeneutic: the idea that the interaction of the New Testament text and its interpreters is a dynamic event, tied indissolubly to the dynamic activity of God among humans, in the power of his Spirit. The challenge of pentecostal hermeneutics is to take this into consideration, to adequately describe its implications for the interpretive process, and to practice it in such a way that the God of the Bible achieves his purpose through the making known of his oracles. With this in mind, this study turns to the challenge of applying such a process to a portion of the New Testament.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 5

1. Tarr (1997:203), concluding an impassioned appeal to pentecostal academic institutions to return to the experience of the fullness of the power of the Spirit in the teaching process, urges: 'I submit that Pentecostals must cease to be content to let Evangelicals, by default, determine the shape and content of the hermeneutical and theological agenda.' It is clear that he sees the evangelical influence as detrimental to the pentecostal distinctive of empowerment.

2. Or, in the language of popular pentecostalism: there is no 'amen' at the end of the Acts of the Apostles.

3. 'Pentecostal lifestyle has been patterned in the Holiness mould in which the movement was cast at its beginnings in North America. In its bare essentials this pattern demands that the individual keep the world and its values and attractions at a safe distance. Where the sense of mission has become dulled, the emphasis upon this form of lifestyle has tended to be legalistic, and the end result has often been a "holy huddle" of world-avoiding Christians - in effect, a sub-culture.' (Clark & Lederle 1989:56)

4. McQueen (1995:11ff) lists Moore, Stronstad and Autry as recent contributors to the discussion of pentecostal hermeneutics who argue for the crucial role of experience in achieving a pentecostal understanding of the Scriptures. McQueen then shows how his own study of Joel attempts to incorporate his experiences as a pentecostal, but also that his own experience was further informed and directed by the content of Joel. Dayton (1985:134ff) refers to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, in which Scripture, reason, tradition and *experience* contribute to a uniqne apprehension of Scriptural truth, which was later extended to the Holiness Movement and pentecostalism.

5. At a meeting of the sub-group of the New Testament Society of South Africa which is concerned with hermeneutical issues, I was surprised by the vehement rejection by most of the participants of the notion that there is such a thing as a 'biblical world-view'. It seemed that the prevalent view is that the Bible is a mere collection of writings, with each author purveying his own peculiar understanding of reality. This is accepted by many in this group without question. Pentecostals (only a few of whom belong to the NTSSA) tend to operate within a more holistic view of the Scriptures, maintaining that there is a common world-view behind the plurality of contributors, simply because there is a common divine Author. Serious thinkers in most realms of pentecostal and evangelical academic life therefore argue for the existence of such a world-view, e g Francis Schaeffer (philosophy), Josh McDowell (Biblical theology and apologetics), and Jay Adams and Jan Hattingh (practical theology). Contributions from others such as Carson (1983) and Dunn (1990), concerning unity and diversity within the New Testament community in which the text arose, reinforce this evangelical notion of a single world-view underlying the text.

6. However, even the physical sciences no longer operate within the clear-cut certainties presupposed by the Newtonian and Copernican view of the nature of universe (cf Johns 1995:79ff). Positivism in the philosophy of history is seriously challenged, particularly in its understandings of the 'certainties' of science and history, by emerging scientific paradigms.

7. It is questionable whether the intent of the Scriptures *is* actually in any way anti-semitic, racist or sexist. Wolmarans may be reiterating conventional but unsubstantiated wisdom concerning the Bible.

8. Ervin is indicating that pentecostal charismatic experience is a distinctive experience because it is accompanied by a distinctive phenomenology, viz speaking in tongues, prophecy, revelations, healings, discernments, etc. This phenomenology is described particularly in the New Testament narrative of Luke, and presupposed in the epistles. This distinguishes it from the broad notion '*religious* (not necessarily *Christian*) experience', which could include both observable and inner phenomena which may correspond to a greater or lesser degree to pentecostal charismatic phenomena, but without direct reference to the Scriptural criteria for describing and regulating such things. It also distinguishes it from 'inner' experiences of specifically Christian piety, since it goes beyond inner assurance or illumination to the presentation of a distinctive *phenomenology*. This notion appears crucial to Ervin, as it is in Clark & Lederle 1989:51-63 (*Criteria for valid pentecostal experience*), and Land 1993. Land 1994:15, replying to Cox's comments on the difficulty of pursuing a theology of experience, notes: 'Although revelation is not identical with experience, there is no revelation *to me* without experience. And this experience is a cumulative, ongoing historical process ("salvation as a way"). Glossolalia, the groaning of the Spirit in the believer and the believer in the Spirit, open new possibilities for religious understanding and action.' Earlier he noted (:14): 'It is not experience ... that is normative. It is the living God in Scripture... it is this "more subtle and complex" understanding of experience, one that is "attentive to the role of biblical narrative", which informs my negotiation of the "minefields" associated with this issue.'

9. McKay compares his own experience to the taking away of the veil, as per Paul's argument in 2 Cor 3:14-18 (McKay 1994:20-21). Ervin (1985:33) comments: 'A recurrent theme among colleagues who have experienced the Pentecostal reality is this: "The Bible is a new book." ... They are now reading it "from within", accepting its own idiom and categories, not imposing the alien categories of a nineteenth century mind-set upon it.'

10. These are so much in line with my own sentiments, which I have attempted to express in my own work on pentecostal distinctives (Clark & Lederle 1989), that I find it difficult to resist voluminous quotes here. This is another case of identifying a pentecostal/charismatic work which 'feels' right.

11. This understanding has become something of a pentecostal axiom. Horton (1934:14ff) describes the difference between the operation of the Spirit in both Testaments in some detail, settling on the notion of a radio-controlled airship to describe the Old Testament modality, and of a piloted airship to describe the New. Wessels (1997:61), concluding his presentation on an understanding of Joel within its 'pre-pentecostal' context, says: 'Joel ... is unique in presenting a *holistic plan* of restoration under the title of the "Day of Yahweh". He also expresses it more explicitly and specifically that the Spirit would use agents from all walks of life as channels of communication in society... Instead of individuals who are endowed with the Holy Spirit, the restored community would be a spiritual entity which would allow free

and frequent communication between Yahweh and his people. Yahweh will provide the channels through which he will make his presence and knowledge known amongst those who belong to him...' Stronstad (1997:61ff) shows how the ministry of Jesus and the events of Pentecost brought about the condition for which Moses had sighed: that all God's people should be prophets.This was never fulfilled in the Old Testament period.

12. McQueen's (1995) study of Joel, Moore's (1995) lessons from Deuteronomy, and Wessels' (1997) discussion of Joel, are examples of this.

13. Thomas' insights into this question are appreciated. However, there is room to argue that even the classical grammatico-historical approach to the Scriptures makes a far stronger case for ministry for women than some elements of conservative scholarship have been prepared to concede. When it is *ministry* that is defined charismatically, and not church *office*, the case is even easier to make, as I have argued in Clark 1995a.

14. Taking this position in a less homogenous church situation than that in Jerusalem is not without its dangers. DeArteaga (1992) and Virkler (1990) both present the Faith Movement argument that criticism of the Faith Movement by scholars is similar to the criticism of Jesus by the Pharisees: they were people who failed to see what God is doing. Virkler recognises the problem that the average man has of determining where God is doing something, and whom he is using. He therefore provides a list of 'prophets' who should be recognised for their contribution to the flow of God's spirit in this generation: Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, Derek Prince, Yonggi Cho, Robert Schuller, Earl Paulk, David Chilton, etc. (Virkler 1990:109). The godly response to these men and to their ministry, says Virkler, is not to seek to discern what is wrong with it, but to seek to affirm what is happening as right. While Thomas and Virkler both imply a danger that the church might be negatively attuned to the working of the Spirit and therefore may not experience what God intends for his people, some of those identified by Virkler as 'prophets' pose problems for any charismatic ministry that also takes the Scriptures seriously (and not just on charismatic issues). Cartledge (1996) points out that a charismatic empirical theology will accept the demands of both *innovation* and *consistency* in evaluating charismatic teaching and experiences. Applied to Virkler's point of departure, this distinction shows that he appears to be arguing that the message of these 'prophets' offers innovation, but does not provide sufficient evidence that it is consistent with the Scriptures.

15. This pragmatism is cautioned against by Menzies (1994:116-117), and discussed in detail by Hattingh (1984:225ff).

16. Moore (1995:12ff) provides an account (personal testimony) of his own pilgrimage in Old Testament studies, where he eventually discovered a charismatic approach to the text which encouraged pentecostal manifestations and dynamic rather than reducing it to scholarly conceptuality and data. McKay's (1994) change from the methods of Biblical studies that he employed before his baptism in the Spirit, to a charismatic approach, redounds with similar themes. McQueen (1995:15), reflecting on his methodology in approaching Joel, comments: 'The question is not only "how do we interpret the book of Joel?" but also "how does the book of Joel interpret us?"... Biblical hermeneutics is therefore preliminary to and serves the hermeneutical work of God in our lives.' In personal testimony at the end of the work he says (:110): 'The same God who called and enabled me to lament, also poured out the Spirit on me, as the book of Joel, the New Testament, and my Pentecostal community had promised.'

17. This is in line with the strong emphasis in the movement of the book of Acts. Harrison (1964:228-229) says of this work: 'The Acts is distinctly a missionary document... Terms for speaking and preaching and bearing witness are common. The word (or the word of God or of the Lord) is of very frequent occurrence... These are some of the terms that help to convey the atmosphere of the book.'

18. Autry (1993:44): 'To make experience of God a hermeneutical goal, and therefore a key dimension of the hermeneutical enterprise, is to take seriously God's intention as declared in the Bible: "I will be your God, and you will be my people."'

19. Arrington (1994:105) argues: 'Biblical studies should yield fruitful results for the lives of contemporary people and their faith, that is, results that are experienced.' In concluding his argument he notes (:107): '... Pentecostals see the full purpose of biblical interpretation as not only to uncover truth but to apply

that truth to one's own life and to the community of faith, and to communicate that truth to others so that their hearts are moved toward God.'

20. It would be more accurate to understand not only the conduct of the Pharisees but also their theology as only 'apparently' correct - Jesus confronts not only their conduct in Mt 5-7, and in Mt 23, but also the theology they had constructed as basis for it. Groenewald (1968:43-59 in particular) argues that the best way to understand the Sermon on the Mount is as an explicit confrontation of the theology of the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the world, with a radical alternative which more correctly interprets the spirit of the Old Testament.

21. Many pentecostals can share 'horror' stories similar to these from my own experience: a South African evangelist who divorced his 42 year old wife and married a 19 year old because 'The Lord told me to.' Or the pastor who leaves his wife and goes off into Africa with a much younger women, to do mission work, because 'The Lord showed me how my wife had held back my ministry, and now has called Miss X and I to at last go and do something meaningful for Him.'

22. Ellington (1996:29-30) affirms: '... the Bible is not essentially a doctrinal treatise. Rather, it is a record of testimonies, a story of the relationship between God and his creation. ... the biblical forms ... reflect the diverse ways in which the biblical authors *experienced* the revelation of God.'

23. Anderson 1991 & 1992 has provided detailed data on the nature of African pentecostalism in South Africa. Sundkler's works (1961 and 1976) are Southern African classics, describing the manner in which the Old Testament social and religious paradigm has permeated the African Initiated Churches, particularly those of the 'Zionist' type. It should not be forgotten that pentecostalism and Zionism in South African share common roots in Dowie's Zion Christian Church. However, Anderson (1993:122-133) shows that most classical pentecostal Africans are critical of the practices of 'prophets' in the indigenous 'pentecostal-type' churches, particularly their diagnostic and therapeutic practices. These are seen to be syncretistic with the divinatory practices of the African shaman, and therefore something from which they believe they have been delivered.

24. W Ma (1997) describes how the notion of charismatic leadership in Old Testament Israel is reflected in the Igorot tribal churches of the Philippines. Tribal cultures, whether in Africa or elsewhere, relate very easily to the Old Testament world.

25. Lest these comments appear to be just another example of Western paternalism or racial smugness, it must also be said that a similar tendency is noticeable among many Western pentecostal leaders, even those who would disdain the literal adoptions of the African leaders. Here, too, one sees an emphasis upon the distinction between the unenlightened λαος and the charismatic leader, who is a holy man of God who ought never to be questioned. In theological training in South Africa it is disturbing how attractive such role-models are for the current generation of students, and how the notion of ministry as service and pastoral caring is being relegated to a secondary position. Contemporary charismatic Christianity appears at times and places to be in danger of adopting a 'guru' cult mentality.

26. Stronstad (1997) prefers to speak of the 'prophethood' of all believers: '... rather than developing the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, the Reformers would have served the Church better, in their time and ours, if they had chosen to shape the Church, not only theologically and functionally but also experientially, as the prophethood of all believers.' (:61)

27. McQueen (1995:95ff) argues for a revisioning of pentecostalism of itself as an eschatological movement and community. The promise of the Spirit in Joel is associated with eschatological categories, and the receiving of the Spirit is consistent only with the existence of an eschatological community. Since the gospels depict the ministry of Jesus in strongly eschatological terms, the emphasis in pentecostalism upon both Jesus Christ and the Spirit is consistent with an eschatological ethos. If this eschatology is understood in terms of apocalyptic, then the revisioning of pentecostalism should include a return to a self-understanding as an apocalyptic movement (cf Mills 1976). Both of these categories, eschatological and apocalyptic, could be applied as well to the proto-discipleship group of the post-Reformation era, the Anabaptists.

28. This is evident when one sees which type of speaker is a drawcard at conferences, week-end 'revivals', etc. The relative popularity of preachers at Pentecostal World Conferences is a fair indication of this trend.

29. The extent to which the calling and temperament of the evangelist has become an idealised model for pentecostal ministry has been made clear in the AFM Theological College in Johannesburg. Recently-conducted personality profile research here has indicated that more than 95 percent of applicants to the pentecostal ministry via this College can be classed as: extrovert, given to dramatic expression, people-centred. The alternative profile, which in 1993 included 2 students of a class of fifty, is: introvert, literary minded, given to contemplation of abstracts rather than of persons. At the same time, virtually the entire faculty at this College fall into (or tend toward) the latter category. This means that the tension between abstract academic pursuits which demand application of mind and effort, [illegible] the story-telling extroversion of the students, provides an ongoing challenge to both staff and students. Byrd (1993:213-214) comments on the American situation: '... I can note one complaint that I have heard of seminary-trained Pentecostal preachers. It is said that their content stresses detailed exposition with technical language... Pentecostal listeners who complain about such preaching note that seminaries produce "scholars and teachers", not "preaching pastors". I am sure that this complaint is partially a result of preaching courses which focus upon the traditional deductive sermon outline.'

30. The subjectivism elicited by this method in the Middle Ages needed authoritarian repression by the Roman Church to prevent the development of an unacceptable plurality of doctrines. Perhaps it is its popularity today which has elicited the tyranny of 'revelation knowledge' as wielded by some charismatic leaders in an attempt to suppress the dissent which is a corollary of doctrinal pluralism.

31. Arrington comments on the debate as it was then (1988:384ff) concerning experience and interpretation, and the interpretation of Acts in particular, as didactic for pentecostals. Relying heavily on Stronstad (1984), he maintains that the distinction between historical and didactical material was not known by the earliest church community, and that Luke's writings had a definite catechetic intent. In the context of experience, narrative is therefore strongly instructional, and using it for the development of normative models and the identification of meaningful patterns is a legitimate hermeneutical concern. Cargal (1993:182ff) considers the raising of the question (about normative teaching from narrative) to have been derived from the evangelicalisation of pentecostal scholarship, arguing that before that happened it was totally consistent with a distinctive pentecostal ethos to use narrative that way.

32. The discussion concerning normative use of narrative has not been abandoned in the debate, although it is probably being pursued at a different level to where it initially began. Chan (1997) has touched upon it again most recently. The tension between doctrine and experience in the pentecostal community (as discussed in Clark & Lederle 1989:35-42) will probably not be resolved soon (if ever), and this tension provides the material for the debate. However, the debate will probably continue primarily among pentecostals rather than in ongoing dialogue with evangelicals.

33. Spittler (1985:66ff) utilises this method in his exegesis of 1 Cor 11:2-16, the head-covering of women prophesying. Hollenweger (1982) employs it in his imaginative reconstruction of the events surrounding the reception of a Pauline epistle (among other things) in the Christian worship-service at Corinth.

34. As McDonnell comments (1973:47), pentecostals have 'had their fingers burned' in pursuing an experiential theology, and are thus wary of the subjectivity inherent in testimony of, or ascribing normativeness to, spiritual experience.

35. The use of parable and allegory by Jesus and Paul appears to weaken some of the objections to allegorical preaching. However, if pentecostals are as committed to the Bible as is popularly supposed among them, then ideally the Bible is the source of their stories. This means that the stories as well as the allegories of the Bible characters may well be adopted. However, unless one is able to maintain the strong theocentric and christocentric emphases one finds in the allegories of Jesus and Paul, one's own stories are probably best avoided. An analysis of the major themes of most allegorical sermons (in my experience at least) shows that most such contemporary sermons do not have such emphases at their centre.

36. My own insistence in teaching hermeneutics is that the literal meaning of the text is *also* the spiritual meaning.

37. '... I also believe that it (ineffective, unpopular and "technical" preaching) is due to our failure to train our students how to make an ancient and culturally-alien text meaningful to a twentieth-century Pentecostal church.' (Byrd 1993:214). How this can be done might be argued differently by Byrd (who espouses the methodology of Ricoeur) than by many other pentecostal scholars.

38. Kelsey (1976:233) commeuts: 'Dealing with the living God in experience is no easy task. it is far easier to deal with ideas about God than with God himself. Ideas about God rarely overwhelm the thinker, nor do they geuerally make demands upon him (beyond the expected intellectual ones) ...'

39. Penney's (1997) major thrust is against evangelical teacher's who maintain that prophecy is equally authoritative and therefore canonical in both Testaments. They then teach that all New Testament prophecy should be seen as inaugurational, and any claims to contemporary prophecy must be viewed as contempt for the closed New Testament canon.

40. Arrington (1988:381) discusses the relative authority of ongoing revelation, dismissing the tendency of some charismatics to grant such revelations equal authority to Scripture. He falls back on Robeck's (1979:28-30) insights with regard to the role of prophecy with regard to Scripture: Prophey is subject to testing against Scripture, the authority of prophecy is derived from its consistency with Scripture, and prophecy is relative to specific people, times and places/situations.

41. This tendency among the adherents of the Faith movement often borders on a cultic practice, elevating the utterances (the 'revelational knowledge') of a leader to a position alongside or even above the Scriptures. The 'inspired' works of these latter-day *gurus* then play a role similar to that of the Book of Mormon in another latter-day movement.

42. In South Africa there are differences in style and vocabulary among the pentecostal groups when prophecy is uttered. In the two largest groups, the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Full Gospel Church of God, the general practice has been to use the direct 'Thus sayeth the Lord...' formula. Most of these pentecostals are Afrikaans-speakers, so one does not hear much King James English among them. In the Assemblies of God (of which a number of different groups exist) the tendency is to use a third-person formula: 'The Lord would have you know....' Among smaller and often more radical groups (where sin is 'prophesied', as in the MICA groups - Members in Christ Assembly) the authority of prophecy is often for practical purposes virtually equivalent to Scripture, and the direct form of speech is used.

43. Hansou (1995:8ff) discusses this in terms of the Koresh incident at Waco, Texas. Here the 'community of baptized' declared Scripture their guide and the Spirit their interpreter - and allowed Koresh to lead them to death, not life. He ascribes this to the real, deceiving power of false spirits, as described in the New Testament. I have dealt with the notion of genuine oracles versus those of another sort, in the context of Corinth, in Clark 1997b.

44. Revelations which go beyond mere utterance, but which actually promote phenomena which are contrary to the pattern of good order upheld by the New Testament, are not always easily dealt with. The aggressive marketing of the so-called 'Toronto blessing' is an example. Despite the fact that the only scriptural substantiation of the phenomenon given by its proponents is extremely forced, they appeal to that peculiar pentecostal sensitivity to charges of being 'not spiritual' to ward off keen testing against the content of the Bible. Here is a new revelation where the form is all-surpassing, and the content proclaimed to be beyond intellectual evaluation. This phenomenon prompted a number of pentecostal scholarly responses, e g Macchia 1996 and Clark 1995b. Cartledge (1996:125-126) refers to it in his conclusion as a test case for evaluating the principles of innovation and consistency in empirical theology.

45. Each year when I commence teaching on the gifts of the Spirit I test the class to see how many experience charismata (in terms of the nine gifts of the Spirit) regularly in their own lives and ministry. The majority speak in tongues regularly, although most do not pray for extended periods in tongues. On average 10-15% of the class prophesy regularly. Dreams (spiritually significant ones) and visions are extremely scarce. Most report that the operation of the gifts of utterance are rare in the assemblies where they worship. This accords with the description of the situation in the Assemblies of God in North America given by Poloma (1989:193-196). The situation is radically different at Covenant College (also part of the AFM of SA) in Durban, where traditionally students have come from the Indian community. Their almost daily contact with spiritual forces in Hindu and Muslim religion require that they be eqnipped

with power, and the charismata are more strongly reported among them.

46. It already appears that in such situations what might well be a counterfeit is welcomed with open arms. Despite its obvious non-correlation with the Scriptures, 'at least something is happening'. At the 1995 General Conference of the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA, the president of the denomination (Isak Burger) challenged those who were sceptical about the 'Toronto blessing': If you cannot show equivalent power in your own ministry, don't presume to criticise the obviously powerful ministry of Rodney Howard Brown. This is a clear application of the dangerous principle mentioned above. The Bible as authority is relegated to the side-line, the power of the *guru* becomes the touchstone of validity. During discussions with British theologians and teachers at Mattersey Hall, July 1995 (the joint SPS/EPCRA conference), I discovered that a very similar process and argument was distinguished at the joint Elim/Assemblies of God conference in the UK that year. Many pentecostal leaders appear to have grasped the Toronto blessing as an alternative to the charismatic richness they have lost or never experienced.

47. This is Stronstad's (1997:75-77) argument for the relevance of the notion of the prophethood of all believers in the pentecostal church today - refutation and reproof, based upon their generality among all believers rather than their scarcity, of the trivialisation and absolutisation of prophetic 'words'.

48. Also referred to by Johns 1995:91ff in terms of the pentecostal paradigm and worldview.

49. As in the pivotal experiences of Paul and Silas in Ac 16, where the Spirit does not permit them to enter further into Asia, but leads via direct intervention to Europe. This intervention leads to a Christianised Europe many centuries later sending missionaries to Asia, and not the other way round.

50. Cartledge (1996) discusses the nature of an evangelical-charismatic theology in terms of the 5 Paraclete sayings recorded in John's gospel. The role assigned to the Spirit in such a model includes: He gives the ability to love and obey; he teaches and reminds of Jesus; he testifies about Jesus in conjunction with the disciples; he convicts the world (unbelievers); he guides into all truth (:121-125). Cartledge's interest is in establishing an approach to the Scriptures which will promote both consistency (with the content of the text) and innovation - the ability to respond to the fresh, new things the Spirit does.

51. Zuck (1984) provides a list of 14 implications for granting a role to the Holy Spirit in the interpretation process. He does not attempt to provide a model for the interpretative process, acknowledging that the nature of the Holy Spirit's work does not allow for this (:128). However, he also distinguishes between the Holy Spirit as *interpreter*, and the Spirit as *illuminator*. The latter term involves not only discerning the truth, but the ability to receive it, welcome it and apply it (:128). Pinnock (1993) provides a similar description of the challenges and implications of illumination (without maintaining Zuck's distinction between interpretation and illumination), without providing a model for its dynamics. He does, however, place it more in the context of personal experience of God and of the mission of a dynamic community. He also places it concretely in the context of world-view in which the struggle is not just to understand the text as God-given, but also to understand *all* of reality in this sense.

52. Or, as many pentecostals might say: It is not as important to discover what Paul meant, as what God means. Spittler implicitly equates the two (1985:65ff), where he expresses a desire to 'hear the voice of God', and then proceeds to determine what *Paul* meant in writing 1 Cor 11:2-16.

53. A most useful contribution is a bibliography of some of the major contributions made to the debate by various scholars during the last decades. This appears as a footnote to this article (Thomas 1994:43).

54. Sheppard's contribution is of particular interest to a South African scholar who has noticed how remote the concerns of the modernist-fundamentalist debate are from many pentecostals in this country. It just has not been an issue in the development of pentecostal spirituality or doctrine in South Africa. Ellington (1996:37) refers to the inappropriateness of pentecostals attempting to define their view of Scripture in terms of the infallibility and inerrancy debates. 'I am not suggesting that doctrine is not of vital importance, but I do believe that we are exhausting our ammunition and squandering our strength on the wrong battlefield... We need to formulate doctrines which rely not just upon what we think, but which can accommodate that which we experience as well.' Dayton's comments on the difficulty of fixing Wesley's position in the critical debates of the post-Enlightenment era are apposite here (Dayton 1985:129ff). However, Menzies (1994:119) warns that a pentecostal spirituality that has a concomitant

lack of historical concern may well be developing, to the extent that pentecostals could be in danger of promoting experiential religion that is formless and category-less.

55. For example, although McQueen (1995) discusses a portion of the Old Testament (the Testament often most popular among non-Eurocentric pentecostals) from the pentecostal perspective, and his interest is in vital elements such as prophecy and pentecostal community, he does not appear to use a single non-North Atlantic source (according to his bibliography and index of names). It is difficult to know how to define South African writers of European descent in this sense, although many probably would be happy to be understood as working within the European academic paradigm.

56. The irony being that many who point out the necessity to be constantly critical of eurocentrism (such as myself, Gerald Sheppard, and Alan Anderson), are themselves products of predominantly eurocentric cultures.

57. In response to discussion (at the conference at which he first delivered the paper), Hollenweger effectively added a rider to his major thesis: The Christian gospel does indeed challenge some unacceptable practices found among tribal societies, but that not all of their practices should be replaced by Western alternatives. In my experience (shared by e g Anderson 1992:119ff), pentecostal Africans largely reject their previous practices, experiencing pentecostalism as a radical break from a past full of fear and superstition. Volf (1997) offers what seems to be a more considered discussion than Hollenweger's of the implications for culture of evangelisation, noting that neither accommodation nor separatism (from dominant cultures) are viable options for Christian converts, but that Christian difference consists of numerous ongoing big and small refusals and adoptions.

58. A dissenting voice in this collection of articles was La Ruffa 1980, who was the only contributor who appeared to work within a framework of *a priori* Marxist categories, and thus to be ideologically inimical to any progress of Westernisation.

59. There appears to be a similar effect in the Philippine cultures described by W Ma and J Ma (in Ma & Menzies 1997). However, neither author explicitly mentions modernisation or Westernisation. Pentecostal converts in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and from the Hindu community in KwaZulu-Natal, distantiate themselves forcefully from their tribal or religious cultures, with the result that they show signs of greater assimilation to Western culture than do their non-pentecostal peers.

60. South African and European universities in particular tend to make a strong distinction between Old and New Testament studies. One encounters more cases of 'Biblical' studies in other parts of the world. In South Africa most Biblical Studies departments also distinguish strongly between Old and New Testament studies and interests. The situation at Unisa is not without its own tensions at the moment, since the current movement from a faculty of *Christian theology* to a faculty of *religion* undermines the legitimacy of devoting two departments in the faculty to the study of documents that are peculiarly Christian (although Old Testament studies may embrace Judaism's and Islam's interests, it could not do so under the present name of the department.)

61. McQueen (1995:93ff) mentions a number of voices which are describing the assimilation or acculturation of American pentecostalism into value-systems which are alien and hostile to its original ethos and dynamic.

62. What a South African scholar misses in both Moore and McQueen's study is a strong *Christological* emphasis. There is in this country a strong identification of the Spirit of *God* as the Spirit of *Christ*, perhaps an indication of the prevalence here of a Pauline perspective in pentecostal theology. Möller 1997 exemplifies this Christocentric emphasis in South African pentecostalism. This centrality of Christ is more obvious in Dayton (1987) *par excellence* and Land (1993), the latter apparently being formative in particularly McQueen's work. A stronger Christological emphasis would make it easier to identify the nature of the alternative that Moore and McQueen urge the pentecostal community to be: a radical, alternative, witnessing, *Jesus-centred* discipleship movement (as per the pacifist Anabaptist groups), rather than a radical, alternative *Spirit* movement (as per the more militant Anabaptist groups). The lack of emphasis on Christ may be inherent in an Old Testament point of departure, but should not be predicated of the pentecostal movement. Perhaps the two scholars could heve been more sensitive to the implications for pentecostal hermeneutics of the Old Testament anticipation of a Messiah, particularly

the study of Joel.

63. Cartledge's objection to the liberation theology paradigm is its limiting dependence upon marxist categories, particularly its social-analysis. It application is thus determined by social needs as perceived in a marxist sense, and not as derived more openly from a wider Christian and biblical perspective (see his footnotes 4 and 5 on p.116)

64. Cartledge (1996:120) cites Wright's notion of adding a fifth act to a four-act play of Shakespeare. The actors would be versed in the history, mores and characters of the first four acts, and the new fifth act would have to be consistent with that background. However, it would be a *new* act, and as such would demonstrate a large measure of innovation.

65. The effect of apologetes such as McDowell, Guinness and Schaeffer on conservative (in terms of Bible use) Christian thinking should not be underestimated. Although Schaeffer has passed away, much of his early work dealing with the intellectual challenges of the 1960's has remained relevant to this decade. Guinness and McDowell have both continued to publish into the 1990's, with McDowell contributing in 1994 (McDowell & Hostetler 1994) to the ongoing discussion of the application of a biblical world-view, this time in terms of absolute truth (for ethics). More recently scholars such as Dave Hunt and John McArthur have joined the call to practice Christianity on the basis of a consistent understanding of Scripture as offering a world-view which consists of revealed absolutes. Pentecostal scholarship which is impatient of evangelical categories and concerns should not be too ready to ignore the contributions of such scholars purely because they belong to the evangelical camp. Although pentecostals are not merely evangelicals who speak in tongues, the interests of the two groups are not so disparate that large areas of concern do not overlap. Indeed, it is precisely this similarity in concerns that has led to North America pentecostals being absorbed to the extent they have in the evangelical camp.

66. So that Arrington (1988:383) states the generally accepted point of view in pentecostalism when he says: 'All the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit are understood to occur today as they did in the apostolic church. This the Pentecostal expects all the supernatural manifestations that are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the NT to be realized during the present era. This includes not only tongues but exorcisms, divine healing, miracles, dreams, visions, audible voices, and all the various charismatic gifts described in the NT. Consequently the Pentecostal expects the mode of God's presence to be the same today as in biblical times.'

67. Israel et al (1993:155) note: ' ... the study of community cannot be successfully accomplished from a purely objectivist point of view... The study of community implies participation. It is participation in the relational life, rituals, and texts of a community that makes one a member of that community and provides for a meaningful life.'

68. McQueen (1995:15-16) refers to the crucial role of the community in giving perspective to any interpretation of the text. He mentions the 'Christian community' (p 15), but does not make it clear if he considers this to extend beyond the pentecostal/charismatic community. Certainly the meaning he derives from Joel would not always be welcomed outside of this. Perhaps it would be safer to limit the notion of 'community' to 'charismatic community' in any discussion of pentecostal hermeneutics, while affirming that pentecostals have no cultic desire to exist apart from the larger body of Christ. This may not always guarantee pentecostals immunity from the epithet 'sectarian' (still employed by many in the Reformed churches with reference to the pentecostal movement in South Africa).

69. Autry (1993:44ff) describes the role of the community in pentecostal hermeneutics from a number of perspectives: It provides the communal corrective and guidance of private interpretation of Scripture; Biblical interpretation is the task not just of the individual but primarily of the community; it provides a basis of historical continuity in terms of shared experience and testimony which enlightens our understanding of Scripture: 'We do not merely share a faith - we share a relationship' (:46)

70. I have attempted elsewhere to deal sensitively with the issue of allegations of gnosticism made against pentecostalism (Clark & Lederle 1989:108-109). However, I am as convinced now as I was then that these allegations will always be made, since the pentecostal mode of experiencing God and being Christian requires a basic initiation experience. That this neither an elitist nor exclusivist assertion does not obviate the reality of criticism.

71. I have discussed the notion of 'charismatic' experience of God in detail in Clark & Lederle 1989:53-55.

72. McQueen does not deal with the impact of the realised eschatology of the Faith Movement upon eschatological expectation in pentecostal/charismatic circles. Much of that movement in South Africa has been typical of the charismatic movement in general, with incontestable evidence of dynamic charismatic phenomena in its ranks. However, its realised eschatology has led to *celebration* of the presence of the Spirit rather than *expectation* of the joy that awaits in the coming of the Bridegroom. As noted earlier, McQueen also tends to concentrate on the role of the Spirit in eschatology, rather than in the role of the Christ who baptises in that Spirit. Eschatological expectation that is not also Christocentric, like the notion of a prophetic community which is not also a discipleship community, could lead to an activist community which has no particularly distinctive *Christian* emphasis. Moltmann (1967:154-165) describes the realised eschatology of Corinth as a celebration of Easter without participation in the sacrifice of Good Friday. Enjoyment of the power of the Spirit can lead to lack of eschatological expectation where it is not experienced in the context of the sacrificial following of the Master.

73. It is fair to link the evalnations of Stronstad and McQueen to North American pentecostalism, and perhaps to other First World pentecostal communities. However, the spread of the movement into the Third World still reveals many of the characteristics of the early church and early pentecostal movement - it is a truly apocalyptic movement (as described of an earlier pentecostalism by Mills 1976). This is especially true where the established world-view is highly spiritual, and the working of spiritual powers in pagan religion requires dependence by local pentecostals on the continued revelation of the power of the Holy Spirit in their personal and communal lives. Much of this is evident where I have worked in Africa. However, in the African context the notion of 'prophet' is linked particularly to the Old Testament prophet as a figure of power and authority - this has contributed to the development of innumerable groups and sects based upon cultic devotion to individuals who set themselves up as prophets.

74. This is implicit in the work of Stronstad (who bases his argument on the charismatic theology of Luke), and McQueen (who bases his argument on a reading of Joel).

75. An substantial list of pentecostal scholars arguing recently for a 'special hermeneutic' for pentecostalism can be compiled: McQueen 1995:107ff (in agreement with Brueggemann's notion of a 'sectarian' hermeneutic); Sheppard 1994:131ff; Arrington 1994;102ff; Harrington & Patten 1994:112ff; are just a few examples. This point of view implies criticism (if not always complete rejection) of attempts by others to utilise 'general hermeneutics' in an attempt to understand or formulate pentecostal use of the Bible (e g Israel et al 1993; Byrd 1993; Cargal 1993; Grabe 1993 - who all make greater or lesser use of the hermeneutical categories of Gadamer and Ricoeur). My argument is that, while Gadamer and Ricoeur, and others who work in the realm of 'general hermeneutics', may raise questions that are significant for pentecostalism, pentecostal notions of text, meaning, and purpose (as well as pentecostal values) may be significantly distinctive to warrant a special hermeneutic for the movement.

76. And is not without its vocal critics within the movement, the most recent in scholarly print being Tarr (1997) and Ellington (1995:37) who notes: 'The division in pentecostal method between academic and church worlds has led to a kind of theological schizophrenia. We practice one form of theologizing within the Pentecostal community and a quite different form when we discuss faith with those who do not claim the same set of Pentecostal experiences.'

77. This is made clear in the submissions of Ervin (1985), Menzies (1985) and Spittler (1985). These scholars propound a hermeneutic in which the *initial* step in the exegetical process is grammatical and historical enquiry.

78. A Masters student at the AFM Theological College, Rene Testa, has taken up this challenge. While working in a Christian counselling clinic at the College, she is making a study of the approach of Adams to the Scriptures and their application to counselling in a pentecostal context.

79. Moltmann (1967:95-102), on the basis of Von Rad's Old Testament theology, highlights this difference between the gods of Canaan and the 'straight-line' promising God of the Bible.

80. Thomas' (1994) discussion of the relationship between Scripture and the leading and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, where there may be apparent tension (in terms of the Gentiles entering the Kingdom, or of women being recognised in ministry), deals with cases of apparent *ambivalence* in the testimony of Scripture and Spirit rather than of *contradiction*. The work of the Spirit makes clear what was actually evident in the text anyway, although traditional readings of the text may not have discovered that. Jesus' confrontation in Matthew 5 with the traditional understanding of certain Old Testament texts among the Jews of that time indicates similar illumination of a meaning which had always been there but which had not been understood in that way.

81. Which is the very essence of Tarr's (1997) impassioned address to pentecostal scholars. '*Do you both teach and demonstrate* for your students how God can deliver a drug addict? How about a transvestite? When is the last time some of us tarried with a seeker until he or she received the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Do we demonstrate *any* of the manifestation gifts in the chapel? Do we model only the intellectual side of our profession?' (Tarr 1997:211)

82. The essence of McQueen's summary of his interpretation of Joel (1995:107-112) is his personal testimony of the appropriation of the content and intent of Joel in his own spiritual walk.

CHAPTER 6

PENTECOSTALS AND PROPHECY: 1 CORINTHIANS 14

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the essentials of the pentecostal hermeneutic described in previous chapters can be brought to bear upon the text of the New Testament. The choice of 1 Corinthians 14 is not an attempt to disengage this hermeneutical process from texts which are less blatantly 'pentecostal'. Rather, it is to show just how different the pentecostal approach is to some non-pentecostal positions in the area of prophecy in particular. There is an abundance of theological works dealing with this issue, particularly since the neo-pentecostal revival of the '60s, some more scholarly than others.[1] Although not all are exegetical in nature, the distinction between the pentecostal and non-pentecostal approach to the more 'charismatic' texts is well-documented, and the distinctives of the process of applying a pentecostal hermeneutic to a text may be well illustrated. Since one element of a pentecostal hermeneutic is the notion that divine revelation has not crystallised in the canonical documents, but is an ongoing phenomenon in terms of the charismata, an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 may be expected to contribute also to a demonstration of this aspect.

1 Corinthians 14 is an important chapter for pentecostal hermeneutics for a number of reasons:

a) It deals with *two of the charismata which are most evident* in pentecostalism, viz tongues and prophecy, and therefore also with the notion of ongoing revelation;

b) It does so in the *context of a particular ethical value*, viz love. Thus lifestyle, behaviour and 'affections' are not excluded from the discussion;

c) It is part of a broader discussion on the worship service, thus dealing with prophecy in the *liturgy* in particular;

d) The *historical background* to the epistle is well understood, from implications

of the text itself, from the account of Acts 18, and from modern archaeology and classical studies.

The chosen chapter also has limitations, however. Prophecy and tongues are not dealt with in a detached or neutral fashion: they are seen as part of a *problem* in the Corinthian church. The charismata are not themselves the problem - it is the way in which they are being practised which draws the apostle's concern.[2] (The charismata would appear to have been as much a normal part of the general Christian liturgy as the eucharist. Both appear to be discussed in the Corinthian correspondence purely because of abuse in that congregation.[3]) However, there is sufficient data from the rest of the New Testament and from the Fathers to offer us wider insights into the nature and extent of prophetic manifestations in the early churches.

1 Corinthians 14 also does not offer much data on the ministry of the *prophet*, as an office within the church (eg. as listed in Eph 4:11). It appears to deal solely with believers who prophesy.[4] There is little information here on the nature and ministry of men like Agabus of Judea (Ac 21:10-11).[5] However, it is unlikely that the gift can be separated rigidly from the gifted, and our consideration of the operation of the charism in the New Testament can be informed by the nature and experience of charismatics throughout the divine history with humanity, including the Old Testament seers and prophets, and groups such as the Montanists and Anabaptists.

6.1 Exegetical method applied in this chapter

The study will not proceed as a verse-by-verse commentary, but will attempt to highlight particular pentecostal values and issues in the text. While the discussion proceeds within the textual bounds of the canonical chapter 14, it is recognised that *this large pericope cannot be understood outside of its wider context*. This ever-widening circle proceeds as follows:

i) The apostle's concern with regard to abuse of the charismata (chaps 12-14);

ii) The apostle deals with problems of conduct and demeanour in the worship

service (chaps 11-14);

iii) The apostle deals with questions and problems raised by and in the Corinthian community (chaps 7-16);

iv) The apostle's 2nd communication[6] to the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians), called forth by problems in the community as reported to him by others, and by their questions to him.

v) Paul's often troubled relationship with the Corinthian church, as depicted in his four letters to them, of which two are incorporated in the Christian canon (1 & 2 Corinthians);

vi) The ministry of Paul the apostle to the Gentile Roman-Hellenistic world;

vii) The mission of the apostles of Jesus Christ after his resurrection and ascension, and the empowering of Pentecost;

viii) The revelation of the saving power of the God of the Bible in his Son, Jesus Christ;

ix) The revelation of God's care and grace, in entering into a recorded history withe human race, in which he chose individuals and peoples to achieve his purpose of saving human beings from their sin, rebellion and alienation from their Maker. i e the total history of God with humanity.

The pentecostal approach to the Bible (both as a complex and diverse text and as a revelation) is *holistic*, and thus every aspect of this context has relevance to the discussion of the 1 Corinthians 14. The pentecostal view of how God deals with humanity is equally holistic, and does not admit to an enforced dispensational *a priori*. That there are differences and diversity in the ways God has revealed himself at various times in history is not disputed. However, even the most obvious dispensational distinction between the Old and New Testaments cannot be viewed as absolute and all-pervading. In our context, the nature of propbecy and of prophets in the Old Testament and the New may reveal significant distinctives, but this does not negate meaningful parallels between the two phenomena.[7]

Prophecy is also not viewed by pentecostals merely as an interesting historical phenomenon: *it is something that every pentecostal has experienced as an observer, and which a significant*

number have experienced as participants. Even if the worse-case counter-argument (that what pentecostals today term prophecy has no relationship whatsoever to the phenomenon in the first century community) were valid, they still have experience of *a* phenomenon which they can bring to their investigation.[8] Their exegesis is thus informed by their experience and practice. From the context of a charismatic community the charismatic practice of an earlier charismatic community is being investigated. In terms of a cautious appropriation of reader-response theories (e g Iser[9]), a pentecostal/charismatic individual has material which is distinctive with which to 'fill in the blanks' of the Corinthian epistles, and may do so in a distinctive milieu.

The apostle acknowledges *the normative and regulatory role of the charismatic community* throughout the chapter. This is evident not only in the subject matter (tongues and prophecy), but in the weighing of prophetic utterances (v 29) and in his final injunction to the charismatic members: Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός, ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή (v 37). This acknowledgement goes beyond recognition of the Holy Spirit as 'illuminator' of a text: the Holy Spirit is the ongoing *source* of continuing revelation and of authority in the charismatic community. This was so pervasive in the Pauline churches that Paul asserts: You *all* have the power to prophesy: δύνασθε γὰρ ... πάντες προφητεύειν (v 31). Here δύνασθε means 'ability' rather than 'permission or right'.[10]

In pentecostal discussion with evangelicals on the use of the Bible, this distinctive is often the most hotly debated[11]. Many late twentieth century conservative evangelicals appear to view the Bible from the paradigm of Orthodoxy, in which the primary role of the book is as a source-book of doctrine. Although at times pentecostals have appeared to affirm this themselves in their stated beliefs, in practice *the Bible operates far more as map than as the territory itself*. The *dynamic* of Christianity is perceived by pentecostals in the ongoing activity of God himself - the book is 'merely' the guide to participation in that activity. An indispensable guide, an irreplaceable guide, an essential guide - but nevertheless, a guide, not the source or reality. Obviously as a revelation which communicates data concerning God and his ways to humans, the Bible must be considered a source in certain respects - a source of information, a source of criteria by which to evaluate spirituality and life-style. However, and here the Montanist (Tertullian in particular) and Anabaptist insights are so crucial, it is primarily the description

of a Way.... and reaches its full potential as revelation when interpreted in the context of walking in that Way. This insight underlies the history of many Christian revivals - the great revivals from Montanism to Wales and Azusa Street being based not upon new insights into Biblical doctrine, but on rediscoveries of the Way, and its implications for sinners and for disciples. The Johannine insight states expressly, lest by Way some form of legalism is supposed: the Way is also the Truth, which is a person.[12]

The Holy Spirit is thus liberated by a pentecostal paradigm from a merely supportive role in exegesis to a dynamic source and ongoing participant[13]. *Exegesis becomes an ongoing interplay between personal and communal experience and the text*, the one informing the other. The worst excesses of subjectivity can be countered by granting the literal meaning of the text priority where tensions and discrepancies arise, and by utilising the criteria that the text itself offers in evaluating testimonies of experience.[14] The Holy Spirit is regarded as far more than the source of light shed on the text: He is expected to offer personal and corporate guidance, to grant discernment between true and false, to empower Christian witness based upon the message of the text, and to demonstrate the ongoing involvement of the God of the Bible with needy humanity. Thus in pentecostal prophecy God is heard to speak, the ongoing activity of the Spirit is experienced, the dynamic of God's mission in Christ Jesus receives further guidance and impetus, and God continues his history with humanity.

Charismatic communities are not limited to the Western middle-class. Many contemporary charismatic and pentecostal texts afford this impression, probably because they arise in the context of such a community and are not intended to address perceptions that may arise in any vastly difference cultural situation. It would not be too much to assert that the white Western pentecostal world has been impoverished by its segregation from other cultures. *The sang-froide* with which Indian and African pentecostals in Southern Africa deal with manifestations of the demonic and other forms of occultism is often startling to the unprepared Westerner. These Christians live in cultures in which the true impact and implications of the charismatic dimension for their Christian community is realised daily. Their experience of the charismata is thus wider than the occasional tongues, interpretation and prophecy, and includes discerning of spirits, exorcism, and dynamic deliverance and healing on an almost daily basis.[15] The

concern of Sheppard and others that pentecostals be aware of their multi-cultural roots and contributions should no longer be peripheral to pentecostal academic deliberations. The high profile of North Atlantic input into pentecostal theologising will probably never be replaced by any other: however, input from those most involved in trans-cultural work in pentecostalism should be actively sought, with as wide a spectrum of perspectives as possible from each area encouraged. In this way partisanship or 'correctness' can be avoided which might lead to unbalanced or uninformed findings.[16]

The exegesis done in this chapter will *attempt to remain aware of the ongoing hermeneutical debate in both Christian and secular circles*. As popular Western culture moves more into the post-modern paradigm, spirituality with all its manifestations is taken more seriously by the person in the street. A generation is emerging in which spiritual experiences (or acceptance of their legitimacy) are the norm rather than the exception. This entails the gamut from narcotic-induced sensation through out-of-body-experiences to 'channelling', where a spirit is believed to speak through a human being. In short, *the late twentieth century, even in the Western world, is becoming very similar in its understanding of 'spirit' to the hellenistic world of the first century*.[17] The spirits are speaking again, or rather, people in the Western world are once again ἐν πνεύματι λαλῶν (1 Cor 12:3), both within the church and in the New Age consciousness. A pentecostal exegesis of a very 'spiritual' chapter may argue that a significant challenge to the contemporary relevance of the Bible is not so much from positivistic scientific method as from illegitimate (from the biblical Christian point of view) spirituality.

A credible application of a Pentecostal hermeneutic could reflect something of the notion of 'suspicion and retrieval' attributed by Thiselton (1992:344-378) to Ricoeur. Although Ricoeur's motivation toward suspicion has its roots in Freudian psychoanalysis (invoking a paradigm of anthropology alien to that of the average pentecostal), its purpose of 'confronting idols' is certainly applicable to late twentieth century pentecostalism. The movement is becoming increasingly marked by emotional commitment by individuals and movements to personalities, phenomena, traditions and values which are uncritically accepted. This commitment involves commitment to 'clear' meanings of the text which must 'obviously' be understood in a certain way. There is also the tendency to what veteran pentecostal Cartwright

terms 'the besetting sin of pragmatism: if something is successful... many Pentecostals/charismatics will probably think it is of God and they will support it' (quoted in Smail, Walker & Wright 1994:75). To the extent that a Ricoeurian hermeneutic will encourage scepticism toward such interpretations and their implications, it is a sorely required perspective in pentecostalism. However, whether his notion of retrieval or so-called 'second naivete' can be adequately equated with the pentecostal use of Scripture is more doubtful. If the Ricoeurian input leads to a re-reading of the text that confronts the religious idols of the day, that is consistent with its propositional and confrontational use in pentecostalism. If, however, the notion of retrieval merely provides opportunity or excuse to use 'Bible-speak' in a sceptical intellectual environment, this would not correspond with the notion of Scriptural authority held in pentecostal circles. Nevertheless, as long as the concepts of 'revelation knowledge', and of uniquely authoritative individuals who are beyond criticism, are closely linked to immediate revelation and the gift of prophecy, Ricoeur's urge to suspicion is relevant for our exegesis of New Testament texts dealing with these matters. The extent to which Ricoeur urges this suspicion to penetrate might also proceed beyond scepticism of the intent of other interpreters to scepticism of the apparently 'clear meaning' of the text derived by oneself.

This exegesis will also take into consideration *the relevance for today of a written text received as authoritative by a charismatic community*. The relationship between the writer (Paul) and his readers was dynamic, and can be meaningfully reconstructed from biblical and extra-biblical data. Thus the chapter provides something of a cameo upon the interplay of author's intent and reader-response.[18] It also raises the question of how charismatic norms are to be applied in the interpretation of inspired texts, what is valid and what is invalid in the process. The Corinthian correspondence is a good example of the interplay between inspiration of a text and interpretation by a dynamic charismatic community.[19] While the Pauline insights into law, grace and faith as set out in the great soteriological epistles were the essential basis of the Reformation, in the intellectual atmosphere of the end of the twentieth century the Corinthian correspondence might be imperative and relevant reading for the churches, particularly the pentecostal and charismatic groups.

1 Corinthians 14 also raises *the significance for biblical hermeneutics of the actual speaking*

of God, and of human encounter with God. Where Ricoeur notes that the book of Job does not end with an answer to any of Job's existential questions (Ricoeur 1969:314-321; 1980:87,89), a pentecostal reading of that Old Testament work might note that the impact of the theophany which concludes the cycles of speeches was such as to change the question-and-answer paradigm radically. The book of Job is thus not merely a poetic expression of certain timeless truths; it is a logical and intelligible attempt to describe (in admittedly poetic form) what happens to a communication process when God *appears* and *speaks*. This type of change of paradigm when God speaks directly is referred to in 1 Cor 14:24, and is also part of Paul's own conversion experience. γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης (Rom 3:4).[20] The significance of the Pentecostal movement for contemporary hermeneutics is precisely here: it claims that God still speaks to and through human beings. What happens to hermeneutical theory when God is taken seriously as a participant in the communication process? *Is* there an adequate hermeneutical theory to deal with the immediate speaking of God? The size and impact of the pentecostal/charismatic movement demands that this question be taken seriously. It also confronts humanity with the change that takes place in a person's personal paradigm of understanding when the transcendent confronts the immanent, as in Paul's Christian initiation on the Damascus road, and in the charismatic content of his encounter with Ananias of Damascus. In view of the fact that contemporary New Age practices emphasise the role of spirits who speak, the notion of indisputable and immediate communication between humans and personal spirit-entities also cannot be ignored. The essential difference between the *mode* of the speaking of demonic spirits (e g the central role of ecstasy) and that of the speaking of God's spirit must also be clearly articulated.[21] The *content* of the speaking can also be weighed (1 Cor 12:3; 1 John 4:1-3). Hanson (1995:8-11) provides immediately contemporary comment on the dangers inherent in 'hearing God speak' without weighing the mode and content of that speech. He speaks of the 'false spirits' that were revealed in the David Koresh fiasco in Waco, Texas, and categorises them with the many false spirits of prophecy mentioned and illustrated in the Old Testament. The problem is as real today as in Zwickau nearly 5 centuries ago: yet for all these dangers, the pentecostal movement dare not deny God the right to speak - authentically.[22]

The following is a suggestion of how 1 Corinthians 14 might be understood, applied and

proclaimed, in and by a radical, alternative, Jesus-centred, witnessing, discipleship community.

6.2 Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14

1 Corinthians 14 is part of Paul's handling of the liturgical problems occurring in the Corinthian community.[23] The complete section dealing with this is 1 Cor 11-14. It consists both of an extension of the principle of concern for the other rather than for one's own self, and of the ultimate and essential nature of that principle, defined as love and expounded in chapter 13. This treatise on the liturgy of public worship can be subdivided as follows:

i)	The demeanour of women in the worship service	11:2-16
ii)	Problems associated with the Lord's Supper	11:17-34
iii)	Diversity of gifts and ministries in one body	12:1-31
iv)	Love defined	13:1-13
v)	Gifts of utterance[24] in the worship service	14:1-40

The subject of prophecy is dealt with by Paul in chapter 14 under a number of headings. These will be used in the following exegesis. They are:

i)	Prophecy (compared to tongues) as normal liturgical activity	14:1-19
ii)	Prophecy as a sign	14:20-25
iii)	Prophecy (and tongues) regulated	14:26-33a
iv)	Decorum and spiritual discernment within the community	14:33b-40

It is not within the scope of this work to expound at vast length on the nature and extent of New Testament prophecy. This has been done in great detail and from a number of varying perspectives by many others.[25] The primary concern here is to expound Paul's message to the Corinthians concerning this gift, and in particular to illustrate a particular hermeneutical approach. However, a number of points must be made in explanation of the pentecostal position on this gift:[26]

i) The gift of prophecy is *associated with* the Old Testament 'word of the Lord', and is thus significantly different to inspired preaching or teaching;

ii) The gift is *distinguished from* the Old Testament 'word of the Lord' in that prophetic utterance in the New Testament is not considered an infallible (therefore canonical) word;

iii) The New Testament prophet or prophesier is not an isolated charismatic individual among a people who do not have the Spirit in or upon them, but is part of a charismatic community of equally endowed individuals;

iv) Prophecy is part of the normal liturgy of a pentecostal meeting.

Many of these values have their origin in a pentecostal understanding of 1 Corinthians 14, as will be seen below. However, it must be made clear here that this exegesis will proceed upon the basis of this pre-understanding, which is part of this exegete's own normal experience and understanding. An exposition of 1 Corinthians 14 from this perspective will thus differ significantly in its point of departure and intent from, for instance, the *International Critical Commentary* volume contributed by Robertson and Plummer (1910),[27] where prophecy is referred to as 'preaching the word with power' (:266), and the prophesier as 'one who is inspired to preach' (:302). The notion that prophesying is preaching or inspired teaching appears widespread outside of pentecostal/charismatic circles, as the following examples from a representative sampling of translations and commentaries indicates: *The Living Bible* translates προφήτης as 'one who prophesies, preaching the messages of God'; J. B. Phillips renders it 'he who preaches the word of God' and in vs 29 translates the term directly as 'preacher'. Rather more enigmatically *Die Gute Nachricht* (the German equivalent of *Today's English Version*) refers to those who prophesy as those who 'Weisungen von Gott empfängt'. Various popular commentaries adopt this approach: e g Jamieson, Fausset & Brown (1961:1218) refer to prophecy as to 'speak and exhort under inspiration.... whether as to future events.... or explaining obscure parts of Scripture.... or illustrating and setting forth questions of Christian doctrine and practice'. This seems to be in line with that classic of pious Christian commentary, Matthew Henry (1710:1819): 'to explain Scripture by a peculiar gift of the Spirit'.[28]

Some of these paraphrases appear to ignore both the peculiar nature of an Old Testament prophet as well as the implications of the Greek προφήμι. The Old Testament prophet operated as a charismatic oracle of God, speaking in the first person as though God himself were speaking, and claiming to speak solely because God had spoken first.[29] The relationship between God and the prophet is made explicit in Ex 4:16, where Moses is to operate as God, and Aaron as his spokesman or prophet. The writers of the New Testament, using the LXX, used the word προφήτης for the Hebrew נביא. Derived from προφήμι, this makes explicit that the prophet is speaking *on behalf of* the deity. Thus προφητεία, speaking as the oracle of God, is significantly more direct a speaking of God than is κήρυγμα, which is obedient proclamation of the Scriptures, albeit also inspired (Rom 10:14-17). This is certainly true of the prophecy of Agabus (Ac 21:11). It may well be that there is a glimpse of the prophetic ministry of Paul in 2 Cor 6:17-18, which redounds with the language of Old Testament prophecy, but cannot be linked to any specific prophetic Scripture from the canon.

This is the understanding of prophecy that is brought by a pentecostal scholar to 1 Corinthians 14. One is confronted in this chapter by a discussion on the speaking of God himself, in intelligible words, through human beings. These prophetic utterances do not claim canonical authority, but neither are they reducible to mere human thoughts. There is in the New Testament church a fulfilment of the promise associated with the New Covenant: *all* who participate in this covenant participate in the presence of the Spirit of God, and may all prophesy (Ac 2:17-18; 19:6; 1 Cor 14:31).[30] However, since all partake of the Spirit, all may evaluate whether the utterance claiming to be a prophetic word is truly the work of the Spirit. On the basis that what Paul is speaking of here is essentially a dynamic and immediate revelation from God, this study proceeds to a pentecostal exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14.

6.2.1 Prophecy as normal liturgical activity - 1 Cor 14:1-19.

In the context of the gathering of believers for the worship service, Paul urges the Corinthians to pursue (διώκετε) love, and to be zealous for the activity of the Spirit (πνευματικά). These dynamic revelations of the Spirit had already been listed in 1 Cor 12:8-11. In 12:7 he refers

to them as φανέρωσις, ways in which the Spirit is made perceptible in their midst. They are the result of the Spirit himself, as he ἐνεργεῖ - works within the believers. They are also the result of the same Spirit, by which Jesus is confessed as Lord (12:3). This verse implies that the Corinthians (had) experienced the working of other spirits, linked no doubt to the worship of idols referred to in 12:2. The Corinthian believers would not have been strangers to the ecstatic elements of their previous and surrounding religions, nor to the widespread practice of occultism in the Hellenistic world (cf Ac 19:19). The worship of Apollo (associated with an ecstatic oracle in Delphi) and Aphrodite (which contained various ecstatic and occult elements brought from the Levant in association with the Astarte cult) were the most prevalent religions in Corinth. The presence of the Isis/Osiris cult in Corinth is attested by Apuleius (*Met* 2), and this at times was linked to the cult of Dionysus.[31] The cosmopolitan nature of the city also meant that virtually every type of religion known to the Mediterranean world was represented there to a greater or lesser extent. While Paul denies any magical power to the idols they worshipped (1 Cor 8:4-6), he is obviously aware of demonic spiritual manifestations (Ac 16:16-18) and links idols directly to demons (1 Cor 10:19-21)[32]. The spirit of 1 Cor 12:3 is echoed in 1 Jn 4:1-3: δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν...It is clear that the notion of intelligible communication from the spiritual realm to the material is taken seriously in the New Testament. There is obviously an element of risk involved where spiritual manifestations are encouraged, but Paul makes it clear that this risk is not to be permitted to obviate the operation of spiritual gifts: ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά (1 Cor 14:1); τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις (14:39); τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε, προφητείας μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτε (1 Thess 5:19-20).

Not only is there the risk of false spirits manifesting themselves under the guise of the Holy Spirit: there is also the problem that the *way* in which the believers' previous gods were served, and their oracles heard, would be emulated by the Christians. This would appear to be one of the very real problems in Corinth, underlying the emphasis Paul places on the proper role of women in the church,[33] and perhaps responsible for the emphasis on tongues in their services. The riotous behaviour at the Communion table (11:20-22), and the implication that those who prophesied were doing so in an uncontrolled fashion (14:32), may also have been emulative of the idol cults of Corinth. The juxtaposition in 1 Corinthians 11 of the problems

of the demeanour of women prophets and the abuse of food and wine at the Communion table may also allude to the highly ecstatic Dionysian revels, in which women and wine played major roles. If so, then Paul is evidently concerned that Christian worship not be confused by either believer or visitor with such orgiastic and ecstatic revels as the Dionysian rites.

The central location of 1 Corinthian 13 in the section on liturgy is perhaps indicative of Paul's ultimate concern: that Christian worship be seen as a radical alternative to pagan worship, and that selfless love be the motivating principle rather than the fear, superstition and selfish ecstasy of the pagan rites.

The type of problem dealt with by Paul in these chapters may be illustrated in twentieth century missionary situations, where the Christian gospel is proclaimed among adherents of other religions. In Kwazulu/Natal, where most Asian converts to the pentecostal form of Christianity are from the Hindu religion (and the most successful Christian groups reaching them with the Christian message *are* pentecostals and charismatics), the problems of occult counterfeits and emulation of the 'old' religion surface continually. The massive growth of evangelical and pentecostal Christianity in South-east Asia, notably Singapore and South Korea, has recently highlighted these elements in the interface with Bhuddism in particular. This religion has been the background to leaders such as Yonggi-cho, and its influence is evident in both the elements of it the Korean pentecostal church consistently rejects, and the way that church formulates its Christian thinking.[34] In such a context Paul's concerns and teachings in Corinth become vitally relevant. Most converts seem to soon outgrow that phase of confused identities. This was probably true in the Hellenistic world too, since there is no indication (from the Pauline epistle to them) that the Ephesian church, for instance, experienced these problems to the same extent as Corinth, despite the documented presence of pagan occultism in that centre (Ac 19:19).[35]

The tone of 1 Corinthians 14 appears to indicate that the problem at Corinth was not merely a question of *legitimate* spiritual experience, but also of *appropriate* ministry. Tongues appeared to have been a normal phenomenon (v 26), not to be forbidden (v 39). So were other charismatic and non-charismatic elements: ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἑρμηνείαν ἔχει ... (v 26). This is probably only a

partial list of the potential contribution made by individual believers to the worship service. However, in terms of what should be a normal Christian interest, viz to bless someone else more than myself, the ultimately appropriate charismatic manifestation would be prophecy. What *was* inappropriate was the self-assertion of the women who caused unnecessary comment by praying and prophesying with bare heads (11:5); the selfish gluttony and riotous behaviour at the Communion table (11:21-22); the lack of concern shown at Corinth for the ministry of others (12:15-31); the pursuit of self-edification associated with tongues (14:2, 19), and the flaunting of personal 'spirituality' by praying, blessing, singing etc. in tongues in the worship service, despite the fact that no-one else could understand it (14:12-17). Paul's teaching is aimed at restoring appropriate normality, viz mutual edification, exhortation and comfort of the believers through the rational and intelligible speaking of God in their midst.

It would appear that in the early church this form of mutual edification was normal in most congregations.[36] It is interesting that it resurfaced among the Anabaptists as well, a group who consciously attempted to return to the ethos of the first Christian communities. This was perhaps because of (among other elements) the influence of Tertullian's theology on leaders such as Conrad Grebel (Davis 1977:39). Where it became the 'spiritual mark' of only a few leaders, it led to tragedies such as Zwickau. Just how long it remained normal in the early church is not certain.[37] That the Montanists offended some orthodox leaders by 'speaking as though they were God' indicates that by the end of the second century first-person prophecy was no longer always a common and recognisable occurrence, at least not in certain localities. The offense of Montanist prophecy lay not only herein, but also in its exclusivity: Montanus and his two prophetess companions claimed that after them no prophecy would come ever again. The accounts of Apollinaris, Apollonius, Miltiades and Serapion (Eu *HE* 3.16-19) and Epiphanius (Epiph *Haer* 48-49) show that there were many accusations against the character of the Montanist prophets as well.[38] However, the prime reason for the rejection of the movement by the more orthodox church leaders appeared to stem from the *content* of what they said (radical apocalypticism and severe asceticism), and their insistence on the crucial role of *ecstasy and involuntary immediacy* in the revelatory process. Robeck (1985c and 1987) has shown that Fathers such as Irenaeus were aware of prophetic and glossolalic elements in the Christian religion at their time, but as Lietzmann (1961:913-194) and Heick (1965:79) both

contend with regard to Montanism, the development of the Christian church toward an episcopalian and confessional system was fundamentally inimical to any such moving of the Spirit. The path of the primitive catholic church in this regard is very similar to the process of the degeneration of *nabism* in Old Testament Israel described by Eichrodt (1961:289-456). The charismatic leaders (seers, judges, prophets) found their strongest opposition and temptation to syncretism from and in the official leaders (kings, generals and priests), and lost their relevance when they ceased to oppose these forces and instead became assimilated to their interests. Whenever a primitivistic Christian movement arises, however, and seeks to rediscover the dynamic of the earliest church, it would appear that the testimony of the New Testament and the earlier Fathers to the permeation of the churches by charismatic ministry is also rediscovered.[39]

Paul's argument in 1 Cor 14:6-17 is that the blessings of God (edification, exhortation, comfort - perhaps also confrontation and conviction as per vv 24-25) are communicated in the liturgy *rationally and intelligibly*.[40] This he also makes clear in the Roman correspondence, linking the evocation of faith to hearing the proclamation of the word of God (Rom 10:17. His exposition of preaching as foolishness in 1 Corinthians 1 & 2 is in no way an argument for non-rationally or mystically conveyed knowledge and salvation: the foolishness is centred precisely in the rationally conveyed historical content of the kerygma - the cross of Christ). In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul is at his most anti-gnostic and anti-mystical: there can be no meaningful communication of any of God's blessings without something rational and intelligible being conveyed. Normal mutual edification depends upon rational and intelligible communication. There *are* mysteries involved in Christianity, but they are expressed in the personal relationship and communication between the believer and God (1 Cor 14:2, cf also Rom 8:26-27).

Paul, in the context of the ministry to the pagan communities of the Hellenistic world, knew how crucial the injunction of Jesus was with regard to distinctives in liturgy and prayer of the disciple. Jesus accuses the Pharisees of what was effectively a pagan style of praying, urging his disciples (in a clear reference to the Pharisees) not to pray with vain repetition ὥσπερ οἱ ἐθνικοί (Mt 6:7). Pagan prayers often tended to be meaningless garbled repetitions of the names and attributes of the gods, their efficacy being in the fact that they were an 'alternative'

mode of communication to the mundane. Both Paul and Jesus deny that this is the case for Christian disciples: meaningful communication is also rational communication. Without it, Paul says, Christians will be βάρβαρος to one another (1 Cor 14:11), speaking into the air (v 9). Pagan oracles were also known to consist of enigmatic sayings uttered by ecstatics, the ecstasy often induced by some form of narcotic (e g the Pythian oracle at Delphi, where the seer may have been influenced by fumes from a volcanic vent). The strong insistence of Paul that the Corinthian community strive to establish itself as an alternative spirituality to that of the surrounding pagans is maintained here: πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται (v 32), and is to be weighed (for meaningful and orthodox content and for genuine inspiration) by the hearers.[41] If 1 Cor 14:33b is connected in argument to v 33a,[42] then he is informing the Corinthians that rational and meaningful prophetic communication is normal to all Christian communities with which he is acquainted. Prophecy itself is not a danger to the Christian community: but then it must be distinctively Christian in its character, particularly its content and mode of reception and transmission.[43]

This emphasis on the rational faculty in meaningful communication is reinforced by Paul's comment in 1 Cor 14:20: that the Corinthians should not be children in terms of the rational faculties, but that in these they should be τέλειος. Nortje (1992) points out that in this chapter by τέλειος Paul means 'mature', but particularly mature in terms of the ability to judge soberly and well. The context (prophecy as preferable to tongues in public worship), and the immediate contrast with παιδία and νηπιάζετε, argues that what he is emphasising is: be *practised* in prophecy. Maturity and the ability to discern correctly is allied to accomplishment and seasoning. It is not necessary to be well-acquainted with or practised in evil, but one should be well-acquainted with and practised in understanding. Since understanding is here linked to a rational and comprehensible word, viz prophetic utterance,[44] Paul is urging the Corinthians to become adept at the gift. This is in line with vv 1 and 39. Although Paul has made it clear that the charismata are initiated and allocated by the Holy Spirit alone (1 Cor 12:11 - no-one can choose to prophesy when he wills), he makes it equally clear that they are to be desired and pursued, and states that it is within the realms of possibility that all of them prophesy (1 Cor 14:31).

Most pentecostals are aware of the major differences between the church of Acts and the historical denominations of the twentieth century, particularly the present-day abeyance of the charismata. However, at the end of this century the pentecostal movement finds itself in an increasingly similar position, since the incidence of the spoken gifts in public worship is either declining,[45] or is becoming limited to certain individuals, often an individual who functions as the 'guru' of the local congregation. Experience of interpretation of tongues and prophecy among the occupants of the pews is becoming rare, certainly in most mainline pentecostal congregations in South Africa.[46] In the light of Paul's concern with the Corinthians, this would mean that the ability to judge prophecy, or to communicate rationally a meaningful edifying word, is in danger not just of extinction, but also of perversion. The answer to this would be an increased fervour for spiritual gifts. There have been some recent attempts in pentecostal and charismatic circles to address this need, but not all have been consistent with the ethos of the movement. In the 1980's 'prophet schools' were aggressively marketed in the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. Pentecostals would be taught how to read the mind of God and to formulate this in prophetic utterances. These schools are no longer commonly encountered.

More recent is the work and influence of the Virklers, *Communion with God* (1990). Virkler addresses the problem that the average pentecostal or charismatic believer today no longer appears to hear the voice of God. He insists that 'intuitive' people can hear God more easily than 'analytical' people. Therefore analytical people need to find a formal method or technique by means of which they can hear God speaking.[47] This he offers, in terms of emptying the mind ('centring down') and then accepting that the words that then first spring to mind are the words of God. The process can be facilitated if the subject simultaneously visualises a situation in which God can speak, e g Jesus coming toward them as they sit at the well (as in John 4). Virkler is aware that the techniques he offers have long been used by Bhuddists (although he does not indicate that he is aware that Carl Jung also promoted similar practices), but argues that just because Bhuddists do it does not mean it is wrong.[48] Finally, Virkler maintains the person should write down the words he hears. He is obviously also aware of the depths of subjectivity that loom here, for he (and his disciples) urge people to interpret what they hear from God in the context of 'submission structures' a system of mutual submission used within the Faith Movement and elsewhere by which all leaders and members consciously submit their

calling and revelations to the opinions of other individuals.

Virkler's programmatic technique has been accused of eradicating distinctions between the revelation of God in Christianity, (e g Hunt 1987, see below) and the 'god-consciousness' of eastern mysticism or shamanism. At a time when the West is being penetrated by these influences in terms of the New Age phenomenon, it is difficult to exonerate Virkler from the charge that he is facilitating this penetration into the church. The vast gulf between the thought-world of eastern mysticism and that of biblical Christianity is glossed over, and where it does become apparent in eg. the technique of 'centring down', it is not taken seriously. Aware of these apprehensions by fellow Christians, Virkler includes a comprehensive section on the differences between his technique and those of the New Agers (Virkler 1990:83-100), but most of the contrasts he highlights are extremely superficial and do not reach the heart of the radically different philosophical bases of biblical Christianity and the New Age.[49] Hunt (1987:218-219) shows how these philosophies realise themselves in two distinct forms of communication: the primarily visual (and therefore more vague and connotative) of the New Age as opposed to the primarily verbal (and therefore more specific and particular) of the biblical religions.

Cartledge (1994:82ff) describes the reception of prophecy by the charismatic individual in terms of the manner in which it is *initiated* (spoken a fair amount of time after it is received; received only after or as the person begins to speak; received partly before speaking and the revelation is concluded as the person speaks) and in terms of the manner in which it is *received* (as 'words coming to mind'; as a simple word or phrase; as a 'sense' of what the message will be; as image such as dream or vision). He notes that the primary content appears to be received as words, although he insists that charismatics particularly prize imagery, since in these 'messages become more concrete and less abstract' (:85). However, he notes that those who claim to receive a 'sense' of what is being revealed report is 'as being distinct rather than vague.' (:84). Pytches (1993:51ff) lists numerous manners in which charismatics understand prophecies to be received: these include trances, transportations, ecstasy, and even puns. However, it may be argued that pentecostals are rather sceptical of visionary or ecstatic reception, deeming these the sort that most need to be tested.[50] This may be because of longer

experience and more 'burnt fingers' than the charismatics have had time to accumulate. However, in the light of Peter's use of the prophecy from Joel on the day of Pentecost, an argument that excludes visionary elements in the reception of revelation from God cannot be maintained (unless one wishes to argue from that prophecy that prophecy is mentioned as *distinct* from dreams and visions, a method which would fail to recognise the formal use of repetitive and synonymous structures prevalent in prophetic as well as sapiential literature).

A pentecostal interpretation of Paul's teaching on prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 will urge pentecostal individuals and communities to 'seek earnestly the best gifts', and to demonstrate prophecy in their gatherings... but only in a context consistent with who and what the people of God are. The demonstration of the presence of God among his people by means of prophecy can not be divorced from the Pauline notion of the people of God as a missionary movement. This becomes evident in the next section.

6.2.2 Prophecy as a confrontation of the ἰδιώτης and ἄπιστος.

In 1 Cor 14:22-25, Paul refers to the semiotic (in the New Testament sense, not the linguistic sense) function of tongues and prophecy. Tongues serves as a sign to unbelievers, while prophecy serves as a sign to believers. The notion of σημεῖα in the New Testament is primarily as *pointers to the power and presence of God*.[51] Thus Nicodemus interpreted the powerful deeds done by Jesus (Jn 3:2). Such pointers were promised to the disciples by Jesus before his ascension (in the text-critically disputed section, Mk 16:17-18). The semiotic function of tongues is directly linked to the gift of speaking in tongues as manifested in open worship: it is an obviously supernatural event which challenges unbelievers in their preconceptions concerning divinity and the spirit world. The challenge to the outsider lies in the contrast between the controlled, non-ecstatic speaking in tongues of the Christians,[52] and the frenzied mania of ecstatic utterance in contemporary pagan religion. If tongues also included contemporary languages (as in Acts 2, although on the face of it 1 Cor 14:2 militates against such a possibility), then unbelievers in this cosmopolitan city might recognise such languages, and on discovering that to the speaker it is an unknown language, be impressed by

such a sign.

The semiotic function of tongues could be negated, however, if the unbeliever or outsider were to hear the whole congregation speaking in tongues, continually and jointly. They will merely comment that μαίνεσθε, the explanation given for that type of occurrence in their own pagan religions: you are being possessed (or driven) by spirits (e g Conzelmann's 1975:243 description of the technical sense of *mania*).[53] Thus the alternative and confrontational nature of the sign would be lost. The current and prevalent Corinthian practice was an abuse of the sign of tongues, preventing it from making an impact on visitors to Christian worship. Paul urged them to use the gift in such a way that it achieved its potential: confronting the unbeliever and edifying the believer. Prophecy was equally a sign, but for the believer first, ie. its intent is to minister to the believer the assurances of God (v 3). If it is encountered by the unbeliever, however, it would have an additional effect: it would confront such a person with the presence of God among the people of God.[54] Both tongues and interpretation could then have a dual effect, if their status as a sign were not abused.

The term ἰδιώτης is used by Paul a number of times in this chapter. Who the ἄπιστος is, is clear - the non-Christian. The consensus among commentators appears to be that the ἰδιώτης was a different class of person, an ungifted or uninstructed Christian or a person who regularly attended meetings without being committed to personal discipleship (Robertson & Plummer 1910:313-314; Pop 1986:330; Ellingworth & Hatton 1985:278; Caldwell 1968:63; Bittlinger 1967:107. Barrett 1968:320 is not satisfied with this notion of a person who resides somewhere between belief and unbelief, and prefers to link ἰδιώτης and ἄπιστος together as one category of person: the unbeliever is also the uninstructed, i e an unbelieving outsider. Fee 1987:684-685 concurs. Conzelmann 1975:243 maintains that the two terms indicate a single person.)

Whereas the ἰδιώτης of 1 Cor 14:16 is probably intended to mean an uninstructed or ungifted Christian, in vv 23-25 it would appear to refer to someone who still needs to be confronted with the claims of a sovereign God. Whatever Paul's exact nuance in using the term with ἄπιστος, it is clear that Christian worship in the Pauline congregations was open to outsiders

and unbelievers. This openness appears to have later been lost in the historical and mainline denominations, where infidels were excluded from the medieval churches and Christians of different denominations discouraged (if not directly excluded) from attendance in post-Reformation historical denominations. This type of 'closed' mentality is a prime target of Moltmann (1977), who argues for a return by the European denominations to the notion of the church as open fellowship, particularly with an open communion service and adult baptism rather than the infant variety. Revival and 'free church' movements throughout church history, including the Anabaptists and the early pentecostal movement, have tended to revive open fellowship. The notion of bringing non-believing friends and family to pentecostal services so they might hear the gospel is still widely prevalent in pentecostalism.[55]

This openness can also be a *challenge* to pentecostal worshippers. Bartleman(1980:48) points out that the early pentecostal meetings attracted various types of people, from hypnotists and spiritualists to 'soreheads and crooks and cranks'. Not only was attendance open to all, but so was participation. In this situation it became imperative that believers be able to distinguish between the true working of God and any counterfeits which might be presented. However, that risk involved in such open practices did not allow the service to become closed.

The content of prophecy is directed at people (as opposed to tongues, which is directed to God). This content is described by Paul as οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησις καὶ παραμυθίαν (v 3). These terms are relevant primarily if not exclusively to believers, since God's particular word to unbelievers is comprehended in the demand for repentance (Ac 17:30). It is thus probably not the *content* of prophetic utterance which confronts the unbeliever and outsider directly, but rather the *event* of prophecy and the atmosphere its content creates.[56] It is not that their sins are prophesied and made known to the listeners, but that their consciences are pricked. If prophecy occurs in a manner consistent with the godly values Paul has set out to the Corinthians, it will create an atmosphere in which sinners will become aware of the holiness of the God who is present, and therefore of their own sins. Such people will find themselves in an alternative atmosphere, being confronted with an alternative viewpoint on their condition to that encountered in daily life or a pagan atmosphere. Prophecy, as an immediate revelation of the mind of God, will make known to the sinner an alternative point

of view, God's point of view. This should lead to immediate results, namely conviction of sinfulness and surrender to God. Where there is little or no prophecy, or where each individual Christian merely exults in their own ability to speak in tongues, there is little likelihood of such a result.

The importance of the 'atmospheric' impact of pentecostalism upon an outsider is emphasised by both du Plessis (in his famous 'steak on the grill' metaphor - 1977:183-184) and McDonnell (1973:51): 'What the classical pentecostal does and says is often far better than what he writes. There is no way one can reduce to the printed page the atmospheric dimension of pentecostal communications.' This is not flight into non-rationalism, since what is being communicated *is* rationally comprehensible. However, the presence and working of God, as revealed in eg. prophetic utterance, lends a quality to pentecostal worship which challenges unbelievers in their sin and need. It also challenges the presuppositions shared with secular society by the unbeliever, which God's evident presence now demonstrates to be empty and meaningless. Theophanies such as the appearance and speaking of God in the final chapters of Job, and Isaiah's temple vision, probably had a similar effect upon those present. Pentecostal worship, including prophesying creates a perceptible alternative to the notions of the unbeliever's world.[57]

While the content of prophecy is aimed primarily at the believer, Paul shows that it is essential that both the church (believers) and the world (unbelievers) hear God's point of view. However, it would foreign to the nature of New Testament prophecy if the so-called 'prophetic witness of the church' were to be interpreted primarily or exclusively as socio-political campaigning and activism.[58] Even when prophetic witness is linked solely to the Old Testament prophetic phenomenon, this simplisticism is less than adequate. Prophecy in neither testament can be credibly linked primarily to that concern: it is ultimately the making known of the divine point of view, which is challenging to both believer and unbeliever alike (and also implicitly to the socio-political values maintained by their society). And if faith comes by the ῥῆμα of God (Rm 10:17), then prophecy, the ultimate ῥῆμα speaking of God, will not only bolster the faith of believers but also confront the unbeliever with the necessity and possibility of believing God.[59] However, the primary vehicle of evangelistic confrontation of the

unbeliever remains κῆρυγμα not προφητεία (Rm 10:14-15), since proclamation is a regular *obedient* activity, while prophecy (no matter how normal) is generally immediate and occasional.

The consideration of Paul for the ἰδιῶτης and ἄπιστος in this section shows that the concerns of Paul the *missionary* are never far below the surface in his writings.[60] Throughout this epistle he has shown consistent concern for unbelievers and outsiders, in addressing matters which are detrimental to the witness and testimony of the church to the world. This is obvious in his language concerning the sin of incest reported in the Corinthian church (5:1 καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἥτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν); concerning the matter of going to court before unbelieving judges (6:6 καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἀπίστων - there is more than moral shame attached to that, there is the embarrassment of a poor witness to the world); concerning the possibility of giving offence in eating meat offered to idols (8:7); concerning the demeanour of women contributing to public worship (11:13); and concerning conduct at the communion table (11:22). Never should occasion be given to the weak to stumble, nor the unbeliever or outsider to be offended in the gospel. Paul's message to the individual Corinthian Christians was: everybody else should be considered by you to be more important, more needy, than yourself. Including the ἰδιωτης and ἄπιστος in this 'everybody else' makes of the Christian a missionary in every situation, including public worship.[61]

Paul's heart and that of the original pentecostal witness beat together in this concern: sinners must be drawn to God, not driven away. This dynamic pervaded the pentecostal movement from the beginning (as recorded by e g Goff 1988). However, 1 Corinthians 14 is at the same time a rebuke to the many personality cults and schisms that have defaced the movement from time to time, where pentecostals have placed their personal pride, dignity or fears before their witness to the world. Most pentecostals of more than a few years standing could probably recall occasions when concern for unbelievers (who were present in that very meeting) was forgotten as pentecostal ministers or church board members or persons of similar responsibility determinedly maintained their own rights in the face of others'. Most pentecostal denominations have experienced at some time or other legal action brought against them by their own members or pastors. Injured parties have at times taken their grievances to the

secular media, causing grave embarrassment to the cause of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul shows in this chapter how far this mentality is, not just from the ideal of ἀγάπη love outlined in chapter 13, but also from the nature and will of God revealed by the charismata in pentecostal worship.

To Paul, much might be forgiven where the motive is to reach the sinner with the gospel. However, even wrong motives may be forgiven if the lost *are* reached anyway, cf Phil 1:18. The apostle who said τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω (1 Cor 9 :22) must have been extremely vexed that members of the churches took the call to Christian witness and testimony so lightly. While dealing primarily with household matters, 1 Corinthians 14 nevertheless breathes a mission spirit which challenges the pentecostal movement today. As in the days of Jesus, 'signs' at the end of the twentieth century often seem to have become an end in themselves, instead of mere pointers to the reality behind them: a saving God. While the central message of the early pentecostal movement was 'Jesus saves!', more recently appears that it is at times the signs which are advertised rather than the Saviour. The sensational has taken on a life of its own, and Christians flock from centre to centre to seek the most radical sensation, and the extrovert missionary fervour which first fired pentecostalism has been replaced by introverted self-seeking.[62] 1 Corinthians 14 is a chapter of rebuke for many aspects in contemporary pentecostalism. A pentecostal approach to this chapter will not only provoke the church to seek the best gifts, but should also fire the heart of readers to missionary-mindedness and activity.[63]

6.2.3 The regulation of prophecy

1 Cor 14:26 is crucial to the understanding of Paul's regulation of the gifts. Potentially there is a vast variety of contributions that can be made to the worship service, and every believer is a potential contributor. Thus ἕκαστος can be multiplied by the short but representative list of possible contributions (ψαλμὸν, διδαχὴν, ἀποκάλυψιν, γλῶσσαν, ἑρμηνείαν). The apostle does not appear to be condemnatory of this variety: there is nothing wrong with so much potential in worship.[64] However, it is obvious that he *is* concerned that the contributions

be made in such a way that edification takes place (v 26); that everything happens decently and in order (v 40); that no interruptions occur (v 31), or that they are handled sensitively (v 30); that contributions be made one at a time (v 27), that contributors take responsibility for how they speak and what they say (v 32). For God is a God of order, not of chaos (v 33). The sheer wealth of potential charismatic ministry demands that for the sake of avoiding confusion and chaos, it be regulated.[65]

If the limit of three 'speakings in tongues' (with interpretation) and three prophetic utterances was set by Paul because of the wealth of ministry in Corinth, then it is relevant to ask today whether these limits need still be maintained as absolutes in a pentecostal movement (or even local assembly) in which the charismata occur only sporadically or scarcely ever. Surely what there is should be encouraged and not limited? This question is typical of the challenges faced by a group which places emphasis upon experience and events to the extent that pentecostalism does. It also challenges an interpretation of the Scripture which could be seen as biblicistic. If the head-covering of women is seen as a local and cultural issue by the twentieth century pentecostal interpreter, does this argument not apply to the limitation of the charismata? Could it not be extended to the other Pauline proscriptions and limitations, such as the teaching status of women (1 Tim 1:12), and the command for wifely submission, the obedience of children and the complacence of slaves (Eph 5:22-6:9)?

Fee (1987:693) disagrees that there is any such limitation as three prophecies, arguing that it is absurd to imagine this when Paul maintains that 'all' prophesy (v 24) or can prophesy (v 31). However, his alternative view, that the limit is set so that after every two or three prophecies were uttered a public evaluation may take place, is not convincingly supported by the Greek construction, nor by any tradition in the early church or the present-day pentecostal movement.[66]

That the Bible is viewed as authoritative in pentecostalism is unquestioned. However, the line between pentecostal biblical heuristics and biblicism is often thin, particularly in view of the incipient fundamentalism among much of the pentecostal grass-roots. At the same time, a relativising approach to Scripture which so dilutes its meaning and application that it has

nothing to say to the secular philosophical and ethical consensus of the age in which it is interpreted, might also so undermine the pentecostal dynamic as to make it irrelevant to its age. Without disregarding the complexity of these issues, the issue with regard to the limitation on tongues and prophecy could probably not be easily relativised to culture and historical context. Although many contemporary pentecostal groups and assemblies may be experiencing a diminishing of the gifts of the Spirit, it is precisely 1 Cor 14:26 which challenges them: ought it to be so? If pentecostals seek to identify with the power and effectiveness of the earliest communities, should not the wealth of charismata be sought anew, rather than the limits waived? The issue is, after all, not the fairness of limiting the gifts, but the wealth (or lack) of gifts in the church. Verse 26 sketches a desirable situation. The challenge of this section does not lie in seeking a re-interpretation that conforms the message of the text to current conditions: it lies in the contrast between the situation then and the way it is now, and if it grants authority to the text rather than to our current consensus, it demands of contemporary pentecostal ministry and worship: Where have all the gifts gone? If the challenge is accepted on these conditions, then pentecostalism will have included in its hermeneutic and ethic a safeguard against the syncretism that has emasculated so many revival movements before it. The insistence that the text of Scripture be granted autonomy, and not be made the servant of the consensus in which it is interpreted; that it be regarded as a subject speaking with authority rather than an object to be manipulated or used manipulatively; that its literal impact be taken seriously: if pentecostals maintain these values in their hermeneutic, then the movement might remain truly prophetic in the Old and New Testament charismatic sense of the word. The current trend toward granting the reader of the text priority over the intent of the author (taken to its ultimate subjectivising conclusion by interpretative strategies such as Derrida's deconstructionism, and by Stanley Fish's version of reader-response theory) can probably not be maintained in pentecostalism without significantly impacting the movement's ethos and dynamic. A pentecostal hermeneutic which is authentically pentecostal will probably insist that in the Scriptures it is more than Paul, Peter or John who speaks: it is God. In fact, this is what the apostle himself insists: ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή (1 Cor 14:37).

The concrete definition and criteria of Christian love outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 is implemented in the other practical teaching regarding order in the worship service. The

ultimate aim of the wealth of contributions is edification (v 26), a refrain which runs throughout the chapter. That speakers not be interrupted, that they do things 'one by one', that an interrupted person not stand on their right to continue, but rather fall silent; that women not disturb the service with their conversation and questions: these are applications of the teaching on love. Where every believer consistently cares for the edification of the other, to the extent that they no longer insist on their own rights and recognition, there is love made concrete.[67] Content of divine origin, fused with an attitude equally divine, will promote the divine cause: strengthening the believer and confronting the unbeliever.

There is purpose in the speaking of God: when aimed at the believer, its purpose is to strengthen. The straight-line, promising God of the Judaeo-Christian Scripture is a God who seeks and promotes growth and progress in his people. This is in contrast to pagan gods and spirituality, where such a notion does not necessarily exists. To ensure the progress of his people, the God of the Bible *speaks*. There is tragedy implied in 1 Sam 3:1 - there was no open vision, and the word of the Lord was scarce in those days... It would be equally tragic if the direct speaking of God were to be silenced in the churches, or made secondary to phenomena such as tongues and emotional excess. The direct speaking of God is linked to the growth of God's people: its cessation implies retrogression. A pentecostal approach to 1 Cor 14 will lead to a zealous hunger for the self-revelation of God among his people.

Another aspect of regulation involves *evaluation* of charismatic utterances. Spiritual discernment will be dealt with below: in the context of this section the question is: how exactly did the evaluation take place? There were others present who were expected to weigh the prophecies uttered - who they were will be discussed later. Bartleman (1980:71) acknowledges that at Azusa Street at times there were abuses, and mistakes were made in the gifts and in the leading of the service. He argued that the less attention paid to these the better: the Holy Spirit often passed them over. This has not always been a simple matter to implement.[68] It could be speculated (on the basis of no evidence to the contrary) that in the Corinthian (and its contemporaries') situation prophecies were left unchallenged unless they were obviously contrary to the apostolic deposit of faith and the discernment of a number of bystanders.[69] Whether it was a corollary that acceptable prophecies were immediately confirmed, is not

clear. The Corinthian correspondence comes to us from the period before the major heresies invaded the first century churches. Perhaps the early church had a similar experience to the modern movement, that prophecies only came to be regarded with suspicion once their abuse by heretics had become commonplace. This would partially explain the gradual diminishment of prophecy which culminated in, among other things, the Montanist reaction.[70] The excesses of charismatics associated with the Faith movement might be understood as precisely such a Montanist-type reaction, since prophecy first really became suspect in pentecostal circles in South Africa in the 1950's after the Branham phenomenon. Here the ministry of William Branham had a major impact on the pentecostal movement, both in promoting the notion of Branham as a 'prophet', and in leading to the 'Jesus Only' schism. A conservative reaction to this, as in the case of the Latter Rain schism in 1928, was a cynicism toward prophecies that led to a gradual decline in their occurrence in services.

The *right of women to prophesy* in the churches would appear to have been accepted by Paul's premises in 1 Cor 11:5. The issue is apparently not whether a women *may* pray or prophesy in public worship, but what her demeanour should be *when* she does. The discussion would hardly be relevant had Paul intended that no women may ever speak in church. Yet many commentators believe that Paul actually *did* forbid women thus to participate. Making the prohibition of 1 Cor 14:34 primary and absolute, Robertson & Plummer (1910:230) argue that some women may have claimed that they are not responsible for the urging of the Spirit upon them to prophesy, and that 1 Corinthians 11 is thus a concession by Paul to the 'bare possibility that the Spirit might urge them to speak'. However, according to them, Paul attempts to counter this claim in 14:32: the person is able to control the urgings of the Spirit, and women could thus suppress any urge to prophesy. Wire (1990:152-158) argues that Paul was expressly trying to silence the *women prophets* in 14:34. Carson (1987:122ff) evaluates a number of attempts to reconcile 1 Corinthians 11 with 1 Corinthians 14 on this issue, and concludes that the prohibition of 14:34 was aimed at preventing women from joining in the evaluation of prophecy. This seems rather unlikely: if they could prophesy, what reason would there be for preventing them from weighing the prophecies of others?[71]

There are several indications in the *corpus paulinum* that Paul was not as misogynistic as is

often inferred. His dealings with the Philippian women, who συνήθλησάν with him in the gospel (Phlp 4:3); with Priscilla and Aquila; and his reference to Junia with Andronicus as those who are ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις (Rm 16:7); these indicate that Paul was not averse to the help of women at the highest level of Christian ministry, nor to recognising them as equals in the work.[72] Paul is not depicted in the New Testament as one who would avoid confrontation on an issue of importance. If he believed women were excluded from prophetic gifts he would surely have stated so bluntly in 1 Corinthians 11, and not attempted to evade the issue (or approach it obliquely) by an excursus on head-covering. He was surely not unaware of the role played by charismatic women in the Old Testament, and would have had difficulty on insisting upon a prohibition on scriptural grounds. I believe that 1 Corinthians 11 should be given primacy in such a discussion, accepting that women in the early church were not excluded from any level of Christian ministry, whether occasional (such as the charismata) or continual (such as teaching and apostleship). Revival movements throughout church history have echoed this openness, from Montanism through Anabaptism to Methodism and the Salvation Army, not to mention the nineteenth and twentieth century missionary movement in general. Early twentieth century pentecostalism was no exception, but after the second World War, for whatever reason, women were limited by many of the pentecostal denominations in the work they were permitted to do in the church.[73]

Paul's concern in 1 Corinthians 11 does not appear to be with the ministry of women, but with their *demeanour*. An attitude was expected of them which was not expected of men. This was based upon the order of creation. Nowhere does Paul ever state that a woman is inferior to a man, but he definitely assigns differing roles as in eg. the *Haustafeln* in the Prison Epistles. Such a distinction was based not only upon the Genesis order, but also upon tradition and the claims of common decency. Wire argues that the Corinthian women prophets were actually well-educated women, and that they may even have been claiming priority over the men (1990:117-18). In that case, these would have been different from the apparently less-educated women in 14:34ff, who are instructed to ask questions of their husbands at home.

This is not a reversal on the position of women described in chapter 11: this is dealing with another subject: order, as opposed to confusion, in public worship. Perhaps pentecostal practice

and experience in the field could add something to contemporary insight into the intentions of the apostle in this section.[74]

Paul's insistence on order in public worship is based on his notion of *seemliness* (εὐσχημόνως γινέσθω). This is not a call to syncretism with the values of pagan society (i e what pagans find acceptable), but is once again a means to an end. Chaos attracts no-one, rather, it offends. Women whose demeanour is self-assertive or reactionary bear no testimony to the world, which could not be expected to understand (and even less approve of) their aggressive assertiveness (cf 1 Pet 3:1-2, where Peter clearly articulates this challenge to Christian wives of unbelieving husbands). The question is not what the rights of a woman are, but how best, in her given situation, to extend the witness of Jesus Christ.[75] The missionary heart of Paul is again evident here, the harshness of the concluding verses of chapter 14 perhaps best explained by his indignation that the Corinthians could be so self-seeking as to negate the testimony of Christ in their life and midst. Pentecostals who know the history of the movement can comprehend the intensity of his feeling.[76] Many local churches have been confronted by the challenge of extrovert charismatically endowed individuals who assert themselves selfishly over the rights of others, and who claim the spirit is being quenched when they are taken to task. While the apparent rowdiness of Acts 2 is as much part of the pentecostal heritage as the peace and order urged by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14, the former must surely be seen as an exception, the latter the rule. At the same time serious pentecostal scholarship will acknowledge that what may appear at times to the non-pentecostal public as chaos (Acts 2 again being a good example) is in reality a mighty move of God. Our interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14 should then not be over-sensitive to the demands of either the 'quiet' arm of pentecostalism, nor of the more extrovert.[77]

6.2.4 Prophecy and spiritual discernment

Paul makes it clear that uncritical acceptance of every utterance which claims to be from God is dangerous.[78] He issues a strong imperative: οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν (1 Cor 14:29). Although he does not describe *how* this weighing is to take place, he does imply abundant

criteria. These apply both to the content of the prophetic utterance and to the character and demeanour of the prophesier.[79]

With regard to *content*, he indicates that prophecy edifies, exhorts and comforts (v 3). It also confronts the outsider and/or unbeliever (vv 23-25). Although he does not explicitly say so, it would obviously have to be in line with the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians contains the popular Pauline γέγραπται or close equivalents at least 12 times, including 4:6: ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε τὸ Μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται. Comparison of prophetic content with scriptural authority was thus a valid criterion.[80] All of these criteria can be applied by anyone, whether believing or not, since they are largely objective criteria. One would not need to be elevated or initiated to some rare and esoteric plane to be able to judge whether, on this basis, a prophecy were genuine or not. The initial weighing is thus fairly simple.[81]

Added to the criteria of content are the criteria of *demeanour*. 1 Corinthians 13 provides the most comprehensive list of criteria, while Paul adds practical indicators as to how these should be applied in public worship. These include the expectation that women prophesying cover their heads; that prophecies be uttered one by one; that prophesiers accept responsibility for the occasion and nature of their utterances: και πνεύματα προπφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται (v 32); that common courtesy be observed; that it all be done 'decently and in order'. He indicates that these are the values evident in all the other churches (v 33b).[82] As with the criteria for content, these are also objective, and can be applied to the prophetic events taking place in public worship by anyone.

These criteria challenge the arrogance of those who claim precedence or authority by virtue of their prophecies. Paul challenges any notion of a spiritual elite whose prophetic utterances somehow elevate them beyond criticism by mere laity.[83] The listener is granted full authority to question or reject any utterance which does not conform in every respect to these criteria. Paul shows in 2 Cor 12:1-7 how relatively unimportant spiritual revelations are to the reputation and role of a Christian leader, asking that he (along with the trouble-makers in Corinth) not be judged by anything other than what the Corinthians clearly see and hear of himself (2 Cor 12:6). Boasting and any claim to special privilege on the basis of revelatory

experience are thus specifically excluded.

However, a prophetic utterance may comply with all the above criteria for content and demeanour, and still not be a genuine revelation of God for that moment. Thus Paul commands οἱ ἄλλοι to weigh every prophetic utterance. Who these 'others' are is not specified. Robertson & Plummer (1910:321-322) represent the point of view that it means 'the other prophets',[84] and that the weighing is done by the gift of discerning of spirits. Many other commentators understand it to mean 'the rest of the assembly of believers' (Carson 1987:120; Barrett 1968:328; Ellingworth & Hatton 1985:283; Fee 1987:694; Penney 1997:61; Bruce 1971:134). Certainly, as far as the objective criteria listed above are concerned, *any* person present might be in a position to evaluate. However, bearing in mind the difference between ἄλλος and ἕτερος (which latter term Paul uses in 1 Cor 14:17 in parallel with the ἰδιώτης of v 16), it could be argued that these 'others of the same type' would include particularly the gifted believers in general, i e the charismatic community. Since all members of this community were able to prophesy (v 31), all were able to discern whether the prophecy uttered was genuine or not. In other words, this weighing becomes critical when a prophecy meets all objective criteria, but the question is still to be asked: Is that *really* what God is saying? For instance, a prophecy of *comfort* might meet all the objective criteria, but the wider charismatic community might discern that it is not genuine because they perceive that at the particular moment it would be more in line with the moving of God that a prophecy actually *warn* the community. There should also be assurance in the number of charismatic individuals present; however, the process of evaluation may be further challenged by the fact that there is no guarantee that the majority have understood the mind of God correctly, even though they might be a *charismatic* majority.

Robertson & Plummer's view that the weighing is done means of the gift of discernment of spirits is not in line with the pentecostal understanding of how this gift works. The pentecostal consensus is that that gift is aimed at discovering whether the subject of a supernatural occurrence just witnessed is divine or demonic.[85] The 'weighing' of prophecy does not entirely come under this head, particularly since a prophecy which fulfils the objective criteria but which is not genuine at the moment of utterance is more likely to be the product of a misguided

human mind than of a demonic influence. Weighing is aimed at discovering whether a prophecy is correct (i e is it what God is actually intending to communicate to the church at this point?); discernment of spirits is aimed at identifying the spiritual influence involved.[86] Obviously where the working of a demonic entity *is* discerned in some human ministry, any prophecy from that person is immediately suspect.

Paul emphasises the *necessity* of spiritual discernment with regard to content, extending it beyond evaluation of prophetic speech to scrutiny of his own teaching. He requires those in the Corinthian community who claim spiritual insight for themselves to prove their claims by acknowledging that the origin of his teaching is divine (v 37). There is some irony here - if they do so, they effectively undermine their own allegedly 'superior' status among the congregation.

How important the *character* of the person prophesying is to the relevance of their prophecy is not made totally clear in the New Testament. The guidelines for the character and conduct of prophets recognised in the early church (e g *Did* 11.7)[87] appear to be applicable primarily if not exclusively to those who manifest a *ministry* as a prophet (a parallel to that of the apostle as per Eph 4:11). These guidelines are apparently derived from the life and character of the Old Testament prophets. In pentecostal circles it is acknowledged that no gifts would be acceptable if the criterion for authenticity were to be impeccable character and conduct.[88] The treasure we have is in earthen vessels. However, if the offices of deacons, elders and overseers were subject to detailed description of character (1 Tim 3:1-12), it is obvious that the lifestyle and conduct of the person who bears an immediate revelation from God cannot be incidental to the value of their contribution. Paul appears to follow the pragmatic line adopted by many pentecostal leaders and pastors: *do not* quench the gift of the gifted (1 Cor 14:39), but *do* work on their character and testimony (1 Cor 13).

Carson (1987:121) points out the danger of abuse of prophetic authority by those who manipulate their followers or fellow-Christians by prefixing their prophecies with 'Thus says the Lord...'. Horton (1934:187-88), writing two generations earlier (in the context of disagreeing with the practice of appointing 'set prophets' in the Apostolic Church of Great

Britain), urges pentecostals to avoid this first-person type of prophecy. Aune (1983:315) maintains that 'inspired speech is rarely attributed to God in early Christianity'. For this reason he sees the use of first-person prophecy by the Montanists as unusual, but also notes that it was not for that reason illegitimate. He discerns parallels in Rv 1:8 and 21:5-8, as well as in Ignatius (*Phld* 7.1). However, it should be noted that the vast preponderance of Old Testament prophecy is uttered in the first-person 'Thus says the Lord: *I* ...' , while Agabus (Ac 21:11) cast his oracle in the same format. The words of revelation recorded by Luke with respect to Paul's 'ordination' at Antioch are similarly cast in the first-person (Ac 13:2). Paul addresses the Corinthians in similar prophetic first-person language in 2 Cor 6:17-18.[89]

This discussion has not proceeded as an attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the prophetic gifts, but to raise the questions relevant to the development of a pentecostal hermeneutic. While such a hermeneutic does have to do with the interpretation of a millennia-old text, it also operates in an environment and community where it encounters what is understood to be the immediate speaking of God. The whole question of weighing prophecies is pregnant with hermeneutical implications. These proceed beyond the question: *Does* God speak directly and immediately to his people? The question here is: *Is* it God who is actually speaking *right now*? For if it is God who is speaking, then the charismatic community is both blessed and challenged by *the fact* that He still speaks in this manner. However, *what* God says when he speaks (if it is God speaking) cannot be taken lightly. The issue of the relative value of prophecy versus the fixed value of Scripture has been dealt with earlier in this work. The challenge for the pentecostal hermeneute is what to do with this speaking of God. If the charismatic community is in total agreement that this is God speaking, what should they do about it?

Two of the major groups identified in the survey of pentecostal antecedents (viz Tertullian and the Anabaptists) appear to be in general agreement that New Testament prophecy does not include *new* revelation in terms of doctrine or conduct (Davis 1977:38; Wenger 1957:174-75 shows that Anabaptists rejected the *normative* application of dreams and visions). In other words, the New Testament prophetie gift normally conveys an emphasis of a point of biblical doctrine or conduct which is imperative and relevant to the hearing community at that time.

Perhaps the seven letters to the seven churches of the Apocalypse are good examples of prophecy in this sense, where nothing new is conveyed (beyond certain christological titles and information), but the intentions of Christ for the immediate situation in the church are made clear. Thus it is not so much the content of prophetic utterances which is challenging to pentecostal hermeneutics, but the fact that they occur and are authentically the voice of God among his people.

The tragedies of Zwickau, of the Branham cult, of some contemporary *guru*-type cults,[90] will challenge the pentecostal movement to insist on prophecies (and all other forms of immediate revelation) being weighed and tested. The hermeneutic which insists on the validity and relevance of the Bible for this century will be at its most relevant when it applies the criteria set by Scripture itself to the interpretation of immediate revelation. This implies encouraging such revelations, but also demands that they be critiqued. Where this is not done prophecies will come to be despised, will be a sign which is abused, achieving their purpose or potential neither among believers nor before unbelievers.[91] The Bible becomes a thoroughly modern book in this sense, leading us to enquire: Is it correct? rather than to ask: Who said it? Obviously correctness is associated with whether it is God who said it, or not... however, this is not the same as that pre-modern uncritical approach which prevails at times among both pentecostals and charismatics, where the primary question appears to be: *Who* brought that prophecy? As long as the utterances of particular leaders are considered sacrosanct, the message of 1 Corinthians 14 with regard to weighing revelatory utterances will have to be emphasised.

6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 The particular effect of the application of a pentecostal hermeneutic to 1 Corinthians 14.

The major *elements* of a pentecostal hermeneutic have been defined above as:

- an holistic approach to and use of the Scriptures;

- a sense of historical continuity with the people of God, expressed in terms of discipleship;
- the interpretative and evaluative context of the charismatic community;
- orientation and openness to the ongoing hermeneutical debate.

These elements are combined with a *teleological emphasis* which insists that the primary aim of exposition and application of Scripture is to promote encounter (an ongoing process) between humanity and divinity.

Interpretation is closely linked to practice, which demands that the initial findings of the exegetical process be applied in implementation. The process of pentecostal hermeneutics is not complete until the essential content of the text under discussion is implemented, demonstrated and realised. This implies that Scriptural narrative be interpreted in such a way as to issue in testimony; and that the epistolary genre in the New Testament be not merely ethically complied with, but demonstrated in terms of the dynamic personal and communal context in which it originated.

In the light of these elements, application of a pentecostal hermeneutic to the subject of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 will have the following effect:

a. It will *encourage more charismatic activity* in the congregation. It will promote a concern that responds to the diminishment of the gifts in the pentecostal churches, and will rekindle a desire to hear God speak authentically among his people. It will emphasise that Christian worship without the direct and clear involvement of the living God will not only be empty, but will also not promote nor achieve the progress and maturity that the God of the Bible expressly desires for his people. The pentecostal reading of 1 Corinthians 14, stemming as it does from a group which considers itself part of the ongoing history of God with humanity, will see in this text a spur to an ongoing encounter with God that manifests itself in charismatic richness, and is challenged by charismatic poverty.

b. It will *promote evangelism and a missionary spirit*. The entire Corinthian context elicits from Paul an alternative set of values to those evident among his contemporary Christians in that city. These values include subordinating the individual's rights and desires to the necessity to bear testimony to Jesus Christ, and the need to demonstrate a radical alternative (in both form and content) to pagan religion and worship. Concretised in worship, they lead to evangelical concern for outsiders and unbelievers who are present at Christian worship, and to an interest in the edification of other believers. This chapter relates to a church which is an open fellowship, part of a missionary movement. Paul wishes to install in Corinth a sense of partnership with the wider Christian community, of involvement in a great mission to take Christ to all people in all nations. A pentecostal exegesis must apply to Scripture the hermeneutics of a missionary movement, not of an established church. Pentecostal scholarship, in its search for self-understanding and a relevant hermeneutic, might well dwell more upon the theology and methods of groups such as the Anabaptists. The movement as a whole needs to be reminded that it was originally very much a discipleship movement rather than an historical-church-type or territorial denomination.

c. It will challenge pentecostals to expose themselves to, and utilise, *more rational methods and content* in the study of the bible and the evaluation of charismatic revelation. While 1 Corinthians 14 is a charismatic chapter, from a charismatic author to a charismatic church, it does not exalt a gnostic spirituality, nor a dualism of mind and spirit. What is remarkable is that precisely such a chapter (dealing with spiritual gifts) should lay such stress upon the rational and comprehensible. A pentecostal reading of this chapter could provide a safeguard against the hyper-spiritual emphases that at times can be discerned in the pentecostal-charismatic milieu. The emphasis upon rationality in this text could also challenge pentecostal scholarship to treat with caution that post-modern emphasis upon 'creative' or 'imaginative' exegesis which might at times be dismissive of the rigours of rational and historical interpretation. It might also urge caution upon pentecostal scholarship in the way terms such as 'irrational' and 'suprarational' are used with regard to pentecostal communications and hermeneutical theories. It also has implications for the question of to what extent pentecostal

apprehension and comprehension of biblical data is achieved at the cognitive level. It also implies the need for a critical approach by pentecostal scholarship to current strong tendencies to admit ecstatic phenomena into pentecostal experience and worship.

d. It will *urge believers to show more mutual concern*. Inherent in Paul's logical argument is the notion of the church as a *fellowship*, expressed primarily in the Corinthian correspondence in terms of *body and members*. It challenges the arrogance of 'spirituals' who would elevate themselves above the 'masses'. The opening verses of 1 Corinthians 13 challenge the character of the workers of spiritual power in Corinth. No matter how gifted one might be in terms of the charismata, there can be no excuse for ignoring the demands of love. Paul's definition of love drives the reader to the conclusion that it can only find fulfilment in one who has the heart of a servant. The charismatic people of God are also the servants of God, *and of one another*. Recognition of, and compliance with, the demands of love are held out by Paul as marks of maturity, whereas spiritual fervour and enthusiasm are in themselves not compelling evidence of that quality.

This demand has at times and places been met in the pentecostal movement. Part of the attraction of the movement in the past has been the warmth of the services, the friendliness and concern of the members for one another, and for the visitor. Concern for the spiritual needs of all has found expression in an extrovert ministry which includes prayer-lines in services, visits and prayer for the sick at home and in hospital, street-corner ministry, and welfare assistance to needy communities. However, particularly in large urban environments it would appear that much of the spontaneous warmth and acceptance is ebbing from the movement. The concentration of ministry in the pulpit, choir-benches and music stalls in many western churches has led to the elevation of capable and charismatic figures to levels approaching that of a *guru*. The temptation to such ministers to use their influence in a crass, arrogant and loveless way can be discerned in some forms of pentecostal and charismatic ministry today. 1 Corinthians 14, in the light of its immediately preceding context, challenges this attitude at its root: the personal character of the charismatically gifted Christian. The

tendency for ministry to be concentrated on the pulpit and not among the pews has also had the effect of reducing the community of believers to mere spectators and passive receptors.

A holistic approach to the Bible confirms that what Paul highlights in terms of the required character of charismatics is evident throughout Scripture. The Lord who washed the feet of his disciples to teach them a lesson in servanthood was foreshadowed in the selfless tears of Jeremiah; in the passionate concern of a repentant Isaiah for his people of 'unclean lips'; in the heart of the shepherd king David for his people; in the desire of Solomon to rule wisely and well; in the concern of Abraham for a condemned city and his errant nephew; in fact, in characters too numerous to mention here (e g Joseph, Nehemiah, Daniel, Deborah, Moses etc etc). There is a character trait which warms the heart of God, and Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 13. A people who wish to continue in the ongoing history of God can only do so when their enthusiasm and power is matched by their character: love.

e. It will lead to *more mature discernment of revelatory gifts*. This implies intense scrutiny of every utterance claiming divine origin, culminating in acceptance of and obedience to that which is accepted as a word from God, and in unequivocal rejection of that which does not (with the ability to give a cogent reason for either). This also implies that the pentecostal movements understanding of the role of the Bible in its ethos is crucial to its self-preservation. Current interest in and debate on the nature of a viable pentecostal hermeneutic is thus not irrelevant to the future of the movement. A movement which claims that the direct leading and speaking of the Holy Spirit is crucial to its ethos and distinctives, requires clear and communicable guidelines as to the authenticity of such leading and speaking. Such criteria needs to be more concrete than personal opinion, or the influence of strong personalities, or the hopes and desires of certain social classes or groupings - and the text of Scripture offers itself as a succinct and commonly available guide in precisely these areas. It could be argued that, throughout church history, those Spirit movements which have passed most rapidly

from the Christian scene, and which have drawn upon themselves the strongest opprobrium of their Christian peers, have been those which have failed to submit their revelations to the test of Scripture.

These concerns are not just distinctive to a pentecostal interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14: they are also consistent with, relevant to, and flow from, the peculiar ethos of pentecostalism. They are concerns that make sense in and to a radical, alternative, Jesus-centred, witnessing, discipleship community. They address the typical weaknesses of such a movement (tendencies to enthusiasm and selfish individualism), set goals for the typical strengths of such a movement (extrovert, witnessing, spiritually aware), and provide indications for a set of values and for a lifestyle that could credibly and consistently be maintained in such a community (mutual and missionary concern).

6.3.2 Other pentecostal interpretations of 1 Corinthians 14

While this study has limited itself to consideration of the notion of *prophecy* in 1 Corinthians 14, detailed comparisons with the work of other pentecostals scholars whose interest has been wider or narrower is not a simple task. In South Africa the nature of New Testament prophecy has been discussed by Fourie (1990), and by Möller (1975).[92] In the same country Bezuidenhout (1980) has made a detailed exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 12-14, but with a focus upon the criteria provided by Paul for charismatic practice. In North America Fee (1987) has dealt with 1 Corinthians 14 as part of a commentary on the entire epistle, this commentary being essentially repeated in his study of Pauline pneumatology (Fee 1994). Schatzmann (1987) has dealt with it as part of his investigation into the charismatic theology of Paul. These scholars have been referred to in the above discussion a number of times, and in these concluding comments a short overview of their findings will suffice for the purpose of comparison with this study.

In his wider framework **Bezuidenhout** has applied a typical grammatical-historical exegetical method to the text of 1 Cor 12-14, and has also provided a structural- or discourse-analysis of

its components (Bezuidenhout 1980:88-141). This analysis is the primary basis of his interpretation of the work. Although he does not explicitly state that the work is being done on the basis of pentecostal presuppositions concerning the charismata, it is obvious that this is his chosen paradigm.[93] His focus on *criteria* leads him to deal with the subject of prophecy primarily in its relationship to tongues, and that under the heading of *opboukriterium*. He concludes (:336-338) that in the context of orderly and meaningful worship, prophecy is obviously preferable to tongues. He makes the following points that are relevant for this discussion:

a. *Intelligible* Christian communication that has the potential to edify will incorporate prophecy rather than tongues (:336);
b. 1 Cor 14 does not offer a comprehensive discussion of prophecy (or tongues), since Paul is dealing with these matters in terms of *practice* rather than doctrine (:336);
c. Prophecy in Pauline terms does not indicate prediction, but rather practical guidance or immediate comfort, exhortation and edification - therefore it does not present *new* authoritative information (:336);
d. Prophecy is evaluated by means of the *charism* of discerning (of spiritual origin of the utterance) or of evaluation (what to do with this speaking of God) (:336);
e. The Pauline notion of prophecy differed radically from the oracles and mantic speaking of paganism: it was self-controlled, not ecstatic (:266-267), and it was not induced, but received as a revelation initiated by the Spirit of God (:267);
f. Prophecy can serve the missionary function of the congregation by confronting the unbeliever with the revelatory presence and power of God (:316-318);
g. Only two or three should prophesy at any given assembly of the congregation, and evaluation should be done by those granted the gift of discernment at the time. This does not necessarily imply other prophets (:323-324).

Bezuidenhout's particular contribution to the pentecostal interpretation of a 'charismatic' text was that he was the first pentecostal in South Africa to offer a scholarly exegesis of this portion. Although he does not explicitly attempt to apply a specifically pentecostal hermeneutic

to the text, the tone of the work indicates that here is a researcher who finds in 1 Corinthians 14 material relevant to his contemporary situation, and not just interesting historical data. He uses non-pentecostal commentaries to elucidate his position, since at the time there were no others.[94] However, the information he draws from these is utilised in a typical pentecostal fashion to set out teaching on the gifts of tongues and prophecy that is useful for pentecostal worship.

Fee (1987) has provided the first complete commentary on 1 Corinthians by a pentecostal scholar. He unashamedly allies himself with the pentecostal position that tongues and prophecy are intended for the contemporary church, by means of a remark at the end of the commentary on 1 Corinthians 14 which is obviously aimed at conservative evangelical sceptics.[95] As shown above, Fee is associated with conservative evangelical hermeneutical method, both by his own admission and by his critics.[96] However, he also clearly maintains the pentecostal distinctive that accepts that the charismata of 1 Corinthians 14 were not limited to the apostolic period.

Numerous references have been made above to elements of Fee's exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14. As a commentary which is offered as part of a series of exegetical aids to Bible interpretation, Fee's focus is wider than Bezuidenhout's, and also than that of this study. He does not therefore offer a detailed or focused discussion of prophecy itself. However, his pentecostal[97] evaluation of 1 Cor 14 does highlight the following points which are relevant for this study:

a. Prophecy is the ultimate charisma for intelligible communication in the church. Communication that is not intelligible impacts neither the believer nor the unbeliever (eg. Fee 1987:652, 662, 687);
b. Prophecy serves as a sign with missionary effect on the unbeliever (:685-687);
c. More than three prophecies may occur in a service, but no more than three should be spoken before opportunity is given for their evaluation (:693-695) - here Fee departs from the view of many, if not most, other pentecostals;
d. Paul is not dealing with a group of prophets in Corinth, but with the gift of prophesy. This gift is not limited to certain leaders or spirituals, and potentially may be revealed by all believers and also evaluated by all believers (:694-695).

Fee hereby associates himself with an understanding similar to Stronstad's and Menzies' on the prophethood of all believers.

e. Christian prophecy is not ecstatic - indeed Paul makes this explicit in v 32 (:696), and also implies a radical distinction between Christian liturgy and the mania of paganism (v 23) (:685). Fee notes: 'With these words [v.32] Paul lifts Christian "inspired speech" out of the category of "ecstasy" as such and offers it as a radically different thing from the mania of the pagan cults.' (:696).

Fee (1994:890-891) notes that Paul's concept of prophecy was probably conditioned more by Old Testament types than by those of the Greek world in which he ministered. This implies some radical distinctions between New Testament prophecy and pagan oracles. He also notes that prophecy is the one charism that Paul mentions most frequently (:890), implying that it was a widespread phenomenon in the Pauline churches. He contrasts this with the situation that later developed, in which the charismata in general were marginalised by the church and its academy (:899ff). He ascribes this to a number of causes: time, institutionalisation and Greek thought-forms led the church away from its eschatological outlook, and therefore its sense of distinction from the world (:899); the dynamic of life in the Spirit was lost, primarily because of increase in numbers by birth as opposed to conversion (:900); the loss of early individual experience of the Spirit (viz. immediately after conversion) led to 'anaemic' church membership (:900), and the church developed forms and rituals to replace the spontaneity and immediacy of the Spirit's presence. In this evaluation Fee shows that he shares the basic primitivist outlook of pentecostals, who see church history after the first century as degeneration from a original pristine condition.

Fee (1994:891-892) takes issue with those who would link the issue of prophecy to that of 'authority', either in terms of canon or of church office. He maintains that that was one perspective that Paul did not share, and notes that it is that sort of reading into the text that causes a problem for some commentators when faced with women being permitted to prophesy: how can a women prophesy, and yet be denied authority in the church? Fee maintains that this is an irrelevant question in the Pauline scheme. He prefers to set the functioning of prophecy in an eschatological framework, noting that the linking of prophecy (and other revelatory gifts)

to authority was precisely the tendency that Paul found it necessary to oppose in Corinth (:892).

Schatzmann does not provide a detailed discussion of 1 Corinthians 14, but does deal with the Pauline understanding of prophecy (Schatzmann 1987:38ff). He notes that prophecy did not confer a higher rank, status or authority on the speaker, but was essentially a very egalitarian gift in intention and distribution (:38-39). He also notes that Paul sees prophecy as a spontaneous and immediate event, not a prepared sermon (:39). He denies that Paul understood prophecy to be equivalent in authority to the Old Testament canonical word (:39-40), and also that, as Dautzenberg understands it, it comes in the language of mystery and riddle which needs to be 'interpreted' by the gift of discerning of spirits (:40). Schatzmann maintains that Dautzenberg derived his views from a study of the history of religions, and that a study of the Pauline text shows that Paul does not consider prophecy to require a supplemental gift to make it intelligible.

In a wider discussion of the charismata in general, Schatzmann (1987:73ff) discusses the question of whether the charismata entail natural talent or purely 'grace endowment'. He notes that there is no exegetical support for the notion of charisma as natural talent (:73), but also concludes:

> Paul did explicitly affirm the grace character of charismatic endowment, but remained silent on the question of natural talents and abilities. Yet, it would be foolhardy not to leave the door open to allow God to be magnanimous enough to bestow a surrendered talent in the form of a charisma on the one who submits in obedience to his control (cf. Rom 12;1-2).
>
> (Schatzmann 1987:76-77)

Schatzmann concurs that 1 Cor 14:24-25 describes prophecy as an equivalent to evangelism, functionally at least (1987:88). He does not agree, however, that the broadening of the basis of the charismata to something wider than individual believers and religious experience is consistent with the Pauline notion (he considers Hollenweger to be 'to the left' of Paul in this 1987:88-89). However, he cannot conclude on the basis of Pauline texts that the charismata are not directed to the world as well as to the church (:90). He adopts the same position as Fee

with regard to equating the charismata with authority, noting that such a position 'has more affinity with the Corinthian misunderstanding of both concepts than with the corrective Pauline paraenesis.' (:99)

Bezuidenhout, Fee and Schatzmann provide an exegetical perspective upon the nature and role of the charismata and of prophecy in the Pauline *corpus* that displays distinctive pentecostal elements. They imply that prophecy was a normal liturgical phenomenon in the Pauline churches, Fee in particular urging that it should once again achieve that status. They associate prophecy with the missionary impulse and nature of the early church and of the apostle himself. They emphasise that it is coherent, intelligible and non-ecstatic communication that is spontaneous and immediate (as opposed to 'prepared' communications) evidence of God's working and presence among his people. And they note the difference between it and Old Testament 'authoritative' prophecy, insisting that it is widespread and therefore needs to be evaluated or discerned. In all these points they represent the point of view that has been associated with pentecostalism throughout this century.

If it is asked *why* these scholars share such a similar interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14, the answer may not be readily apparent. The single commonality that is immediately evident is that they are all pentecostal scholars. However, there are significant disparities between them that might lead one to believe that there could have been significant divergences among them in interpretation. Gordon Fee has established a reputation as a pentecostal scholar who associates his method with the theological methods of evangelicalism - this has been noted above. He is a North American from a classical pentecostal background. Bezuidenhout (my colleague for a number of years) was a *dominie* (ordained minister) of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa. He experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit and underwent water-baptism by immersion while still in that office. This led to his estrangement from that church, and he then joined the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, with a position as lecturer at its theological college in Johannesburg. Bezuidenhout distanciated himself strongly from the Reformed theology of the DRC, especially where it related to infant baptism. His choice for believers' baptism evinced a much stronger reaction from the DRC than did Bezuidenhout's speaking in tongues, indicating the radical change Bezuidenhout had made by leaving the

volkskerk of the majority of South African Afrikaners and identifying with the free-church ethos of what the DRC called *Wederdopers* - anabaptists. The radicality of this change was evident in Bezuidenhout's theology, which was classical pentecostal rather than Calvinist. (Schatzmann is not known in South African pentecostalism and I thus hesitate to comment upon his theology or antecedents beyond what I have remarked above.)

It is unlikely that the similarity of readings of 1 Corinthians 14 arises from social context *per se*. All three scholars appear to be middle-class westerners, but the differences in values and attitudes between the North Atlantic and South African Afrikaans social contexts cannot be exaggerated. Fee and Bezuidenhout speak different languages and have significantly different cultural heritages. They do not share a classical pentecostal upbringing, and their pentecostal doctrines have differed in emphases, too. Bezuidenhout learned his pentecostal dogma from F P Möller (who had also converted to pentecostalism from the DRC), while Fee appears to have learned in the typical evangelical Bible School manner of post-war North American pentecostalism. (An English translation of Möller's dogmatics (Möller 1994) is imminently available, and will be an interesting non-North Atlantic contribution to pentecostal systematic theology.) Bezuidenhout was also a typical neo-pentecostal convert to classical pentecostalism in the 1970's, combining an enthusiasm for charismatic manifestations with rejection of the more spectacular emotionalism that many pentecostals at that time were coming to associate with 'the only true spirituality'.

What all three scholars *do* share is personal experience of tongues and prophecy, i e they have charismatic commonality. This would lead one to believe that a reader-response model of Scripture interpretation might better explain their similar interpretations, rather than would a contextual model. However, reader-response theories may not adequately comprehend the radical impact of pentecostal experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon conceptuality, as this has been so adequately articulated by e g McKay (1994). Nevertheless, the reader-response model takes personal experience as seriously as communal, whereas in many contextual models (certainly in South Africa) the community (the context) is considered more formative (indeed, almost deterministically so) of the reader than are individualistic experiences such as Spirit-baptism. Although many pentecostals are currently seeking to understand

pentecostalism in terms of the notion 'community', the movement still maintains a strong emphasis on individuality, implicit in the demands of conversion, where a convert distanciates him/herself from their birthing community, sometimes at the cost of their lives.

Perhaps it is necessary for pentecostalism to acknowledge that the reading/interpretation process as encountered and practiced in the movement is essentially distinctive to the movement itself. This may also explain why so many and varied claims and counterclaims are made, concerning which model or strategy of reading most closely approximates (or should guide) a pentecostal hermeneutic. While reading is reading, and interpretation is intepretation, it is unavoidable that pentecostalism will share (to a greater or lesser extent) insights with theorists of many different schools, from fundamentalists to Stanley Fish. The individual interests of the various pentecostal scholars will also influence their choice of models to which to relate. However, there does not yet seem to be any clear emerging consensus (which would have to include a wider group than just pentecostal academics) that decisively pre-empts the challenge to pentecostal scholarship to investigate and articulate its own hermeneutic.

6.3.3 Some comparisons of this interpretation with that which might be achieved by other methods.

The interpretation offered above of 1 Corinthians 14 with reference to prophecy, is possible only in the context of prophecy (as distinct from preaching and teaching) being an event which actually occurs in pentecostal churches. Interpretation done in a context where this is not the case (as in e g a *conservative evangelical* setting) might be limited to, at best, historical study of a curious but dated phenomenon. At worst, it might imply total rejection of the gift for today, or attempt to re-interpret it in terms of preaching or exposition of Scripture. If the phenomenon is accepted as 'legitimate' for today (along with many other spiritual or psychological phenomena), but is not submitted to absolute biblical criteria of evaluation (as might be the case where post-modern literary theory is 'creatively' applied to Biblical texts), it could allow an interpretation of New Testament prophecy as merely one more 'spiritual' technique or manifestation, or enable the unscrupulous to use it as a tool with which to manipulate the credulous. However, in an environment in which the charismata and their

evaluation are evident on a regular basis, and where the literal intent of the Bible is granted its full authority, interest naturally gravitates to questions of practice rather than of dogma; to concern for correct practice rather than orthodox conceptuality; and to 'walking in the Spirit' rather than to a 'doctrine' of the Spirit.[98] A pentecostal reading will also not have the problem rasied in many criticisms of pentecostalism by evangelicals, viz how can the ongoing revelation of God be reconciled with the notion of a closed canon of Scripture? 1 Corinthians 14 is understood to imply that God will continue to reveal his will to his people, in a direct and immediate way, but not to imply that such revelation is is supplementary to the Scriptures. The very insistence on testing the revelation implies a norm such as 'that which is written'. Experience of the charismata discussed in 1 Corinthians 14 thus emphasises (rather than detracts from) how crucial the Christian canon (initially the *regula fidei*) is to a Spirit movement.

A *socio-political* hermeneutic would probably find this chapter most interesting because in these circles the notion of prophecy is closely linked to the notion of the 'prophetic ministry of the church'.[99] This has generally been considered in such circles (as represented by the *Kairos Document* 1985) to mean confrontation (by church leaders, structures and members) of unjust socio-political structures.[100] The problem for such a view in this chapter is that nowhere is the *church* identified by Paul as the subject of prophetic action or activity. Indeed, the tenor of the Pauline remonstrance with Corinth is that the church is an object, a product of charismatic endowment, and not a subject or source of charismatic endowment. Prophecy is also only dealt with by Paul in the *context* of the church, particularly its liturgy. The great Subject, which brings the church into existence and initiates charismatic activity, is the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is seen to work through individuals rather than groups. The interface between church and world in the New Testament is kerygma rather than prophecy. The strong distinction drawn by Paul in Corinthians, between the church and the world, and between the saint and the sinner, also sits uncomfortably on the shoulders of the contextual theologians, who tend to take a more open stand with regard to secular groups who share their ideological vision for society. Their view of mission as 'service to the world' (Dulles 1976:83-96; Bosch 1980:187-193) contrasts sharply with the Pauline notion of 'confrontation of the world' which is implicit in the pentecostal ethos that understands itself as a radically alternative community.

A pentecostal interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14 would thus challenge and confront a socio-political hermeneutic. However, if the pentecostal community is understood as a radically alternative group, an apocalyptic movement or eschatological community that can be termed a 'nation of prophets', then each individual pentecostal might experience the working of the Spirit of God in such a way that his own personal milieu (social construct) is continually challenged. This challenge will also extend to the alternative social and community models offered by the contextual theologians themselves, since the radicality of the alternative presented by the Spirit is critical of every human ideology and construct, even those that offer themselves as 'radical'.

A socio-political approach to this text might also be more interested in determining the politics of power in the text and context. Thus it would ask questions such as 'whose interests are being served by Paul here?' or 'whose interests are being served by this interpretation?' Such an approach would devote great attention to the status and role of the various classes in Corinth, and of women in particular, since this chapter deals explicitly with that. Proceeding on the basis of an inductive approach, in which the morality of an anti-sexist, anti-elitist, anti-racist, pro-proletariat etc position has already been accepted, it would seek to highlight sexist, racist, elitist and anti-proletariat stances in both the original text and context of the author, as well as in any interpretation offered by non-contextual approaches. For a contrast between a pentecostal interpretation and a socio-political contextual approach, Chow's (1992) contribution on the nature of patron-client relationships in Corinth is enlightening. Noting how this system pervaded the Graeco-Roman world of the 1st century, Chow postulates that influential 'patrons' (:123: the immoral man, the powerful man, the political man) in the Corinthian church are behind the problems Paul encounters in Corinthian church. He concludes (:187) that Paul's message to the Corinthians centred on the radical effect that Christian conversion and the demands of love had on the patron-client system. He (Paul) offers the body-member metaphor as a radical alternative model to the patron-client model for Christian interaction. Paul is therefore offering the criteria of radical alternative discipleship as a contrast to the 'unequal yoking' that the patron-client model of relationships was driving them to. Such an insight would obviously be attractive to a socio-political interpretation, since it exposes and criticises power structures and struggles in a given community. However, pentecostals might assert that

the basis of Paul's opposition to such structures was not an *a priori* commitment to social reform/revolution, or even the tenets of liberal democracy, but the consistent application of the implications of a powerful and ongoing personal encounter with Christ. A pentecostal hermeneutic may thus be more radical than a political-social, in that it turns the spotlight of criticism upon not only the immoral structures, but also upon the critics of those structures. This sort of approach has been noted earlier in this study, in the criticism offered by the Anabaptists of South Germany (Grebel et al) of the militant political activism of their North German counterparts (Münzer et al). The New Testament text, read deductively, subjects critic and criticised to the same norms - norms which are *set by* the text and not merely *brought to* the text.

We have already seen how the hermeneutic of the *Faith movement*, with its emphasis upon 'revelational knowledge', can lead to a gnostic dualism between the gifted elite and the passive laity. Prophecy (along with other gifts of the Spirit) can thus be used manipulatively in this movement, and this is often the case. The effect of another Faith movement concept, an understanding that the spiritual realm is a highly legal place which can be manipulated by the application of spiritual techniques, has led to the peculiar teaching of the Virklers (1990), in which God can virtually be 'made' to speak by means of imaginative, contemplative and mystical programmatic techniques. The Pauline emphasis upon the sovereignty and transcendence of God in the revelatory process can be a confrontation of this 'cheapening' of divine revelation, as can an understanding of the nature of Old Testament prophecy and its degeneration in certain circles to 'spiritual technique' (as outlined by Eichrodt 1961:336-338). The most radical confrontation of the gnosticism of the Faith movement lies, however, in the Pauline agreement with the 'priesthood of all believers' concept: there is no place found for the idea of spiritual superiors and inferiors in a pentecostal exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14. In such a community spiritual experience is thus intelligibly communicated and cognitively (as well as spiritually) discerned and tested, presupposing that all members share the faculties of cognition and intelligence, as well as a specific spirituality.

6.3.4 Pentecostal hermeneutics as a literary theory - application to 1 Corinthians 14.

This study has maintained a traditional theological approach to the question concerning pentecostal use of the New Testament, ie. it has aimed at discussing the nature of a viable pentecostal *theological* hermeneutic. For this reason the discussion of pentecostal hermeneutics with relation to contemporary literary theory was treated above as an *excursus*. (To follow that course as a major research topic may be a challenge to other pentecostal scholars.) However, it might be a fitting conclusion to this research to attempt to describe an approach to 1 Corinthians 14 which is shaped by the tentative proposals for pentecostal responses to the *foci* questions of contemporary literary theory made in that excursus.

a. **Literature**: 1 Corinthians 14 falls within the epistolary genre of the New Testament.[101] It is thus accepted as *authoritative* instruction, and communicates propositions that are *true*. This genre is understood to be essentially propositional, although not in terms of a handbook of science or mathematics. While a pentecostal interpretation takes note of strategies by the author that may include literary devices, appeals to reason and logic, and even explicit claims to revealed knowledge, it accepts the material to have been offered as direct instruction in Christian practice.

1 Corinthians 14 falls within an category which is imperative for a movement such as the pentecostal: instruction in the interaction between the spiritual and the physical realms of reality. Both realms are considered equally real, but the former has a 'hidden' quality which means that criteria for interacting with it require clear enunciation. This 1 Corintians 14 does *par excellence*. In accepting the canonicity of the Corinthian correspondence the pentecostal movement also accepts its nature as *revelation*. Criteria for relating to spiritual reality must be spiritual in origin.

1 Corinthians 14 also complies with the pentecostal understanding that epistolary material conveys more explicitly than narrative the *implications of personal choice for discipleship* of Jesus Christ. Where narrative illustrates the nature and elements of such discipleship, the instructional portion outlines its responsibilities, values and ethical

implications (personal, communal and social). 1 Corinthians 14, within its context (1 Cor 11-14) does this in great detail, supplying theory in all these areas that is then applied rigorously to the subject of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 14 thus serves an intensely *utilitarian* and *functional* role in pentecostalism. It does not merely provide source material for doctrinal formulations concerning the church and the Holy Spirit, but offers practical instruction and values for ongoing experience of the dynamic presence of the Spirit of God among the people of God.

b. **Author:** Paul was a charismatic individual. The Corinthian correspondence shows that the charismata most associated with the subject matter of 1 Corinthians 14 were part of his own personal experience (1 Cor 14:18; 2 Cor 12:1-7), as were the others more closely associated with evangelistic witness (1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 12:12). He was also the founder of the church at Corinth (Acts 18) and considered himself an apostle of Jesus Christ of no lesser standing than the others who had walked with Jesus (Gl 1:17-24; 2:7-9; 2 Cor 11:5). It is clear from his tone with the Corinthians that many of the matters he deals with were prompted by aberrations (in terms of the norms prevailing in other churches - 1 Cor 11:16; 14:33). However, it is also obvious that he is addressing a group who were obviously charismatic themselves.

Paul was also a disciple. Commenting on the debate as to whether Paul should be understood as a disciple of Christ or as the founder of Christianity, after a long discussion of the relationship between the gospels and the Pauline correspondence (and the contributions made by numerous scholars to the matter), Wenham concludes:

> ... Paul would have been horrified at the suggestion that he was the founder of Christianity. For him, the fountain of theology was Jesus: first, the Jesus whom he met on the Damascus road; second, the Jesus of the Christian tradition. He of course identified the two. Paul saw himself as the slave of Jesus Christ, not

> the founder of Christianity. ... Paul was above all motivatd by a desire to follow Jesus.
>
> (Wenham 1995:409)

Paul therefore represents Christ to his followers in Corinth - but Christ as a master, as ultimate and final authority. He expresses himself as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and urges them to follow Christ to the same extent as he himself does (1 Cor 11:1). His ideal is that they operate as a community of charismatic disciples, which is what he understands himself to be.

1 Corinthians also offers itself as a word of apostolic authority (equivalent to divine authority at times - 1 Cor 14:37) aimed at correcting and restoring orthodox Christian attitudes and practices in a group of whom the writer considers himself the father and instructor (1 Cor 4:14-16). A contemporary charismatic movement which considers itself part of the ongoing people of God, whose primitivistic motifs drive it to identify with the values, experiences and practices of the earliest communities: such a group will take seriously the intent of the apostolic author of 1 Corinthians. The authority of the text is related to the authority of its origins. The strategies of the author obviously should be identified, as well as the actual nature of the situation that evoked his missive. However, the commonality of experience between charismatic author and charismatic readers implies a basis for comprehension that transcends the historical divide between the 1st and 20th centuries. Obviously this has not always been maintained, as in pentecostal interpretations of 1 Cor 11 that once insisted that women wear hats to church services. However, there is probably a majority consensus among world-wide pentecostalism that 1 Corinthians 14 contains instruction from an authoritative source, and that they will equate 'Paul says' with 'God says'.

c. **Readers**: If pentecostals understand the epistolary texts as *instructional* and *propositional* material, then the freedom for more subject-centred interpretations which might be enjoyed in encounter with 'literary' texts is not a facile option. However, since pentecostals do maintain that a charismatic reader will approach and comprehend a charismatic text differently to a non-charismatic, the contribution of the reader cannot

be ignored. This is most obvious in a charismatic text such as 1 Cor 14, where the pentecostal reader brings a personal experience of tongues, prophecy, revelations, praying and singing in the Spirit, to their reading of the text.

The *social heterogeneity* of the pentecostal movement also implies differentiation in the data brought by the variety of pentecostal readers to the reading of the text. In an African situation, where the style and accoutrements of the prophet are elements of everyday Christian experience, a reader might make more of the noun 'prophet' in 1 Corinthians 14 than a Westerner (who might concentrate on the verb 'prophesying') might. However, since cohesion in pentecost is supplied more by charismatic experience than by race, class, gender or territory, there appears to be a significant consensus as to what the central and essential message of the text is. Apprehension of the text also takes place in a community context (or subject to review and validation by the community). If this community understands itself as a discipleship community, a radical alternative community to the secular and religious consensus surrounding it, and as an eschatological or apocalyptical community (of prophets), then it will appropriate and apply the texts accordingly. Since the pentecostal understanding is that the New Testament text arose in just such a community, the notion of charismatic commonality extends beyond the author/reader interface to the communities that birthed and that read the text. 1 Corinthians 14, in this context, describes the values and phenomena that might be expected to prevail in such a communal setting.

The *elements of encounter* between the pentecostal reader and the text are also becoming crucial to the debate on hermeneutics in the movement. Recent assertions that the text is more readily appropriated on the 'affective' or intuitive levels than on the cognitive and analytical, will probably lead pentecostal scholarship to more intensive consideration of this matter. However, the implications of the argument used by Paul in 1 Cor 14, that Christian communication be intelligible in order to be effective, should not be overlooked in this discussion. Nevertheless, it is probably fair to note that pentecostal readings and appropriation of Scriptural texts demonstrate that the comprehension and application of these texts does not remain at the cognitive level, but

leads the reader into experiential avenues in which affections and intuitions play a significant role. Since the commonality of spiritual experiences often issues in a commonality of affections and intuitions (as outlined by Land 1993), individual pentecostal experience finds affirmation and reinforcement in a pentecostal community. It is therefore understandable that some scholars have sought to understand pentecostal hermeneutics in terms of reader-response theories (where individual subjectivity counts for much) or contextual theologies (where collective experience counts most).

d. **Reality**: The reading of the New Testament by a discipleship community implies that there is no area of existence that is not addressed by the text. The text is therefore understood to be relevant to history, to humanity, and to the realms of both the physical and the spiritual. Although this is most obvious in the pentecostal appropriation of Biblical narrative, this particular text provides a good example of its effect on the reading of instructional (epistolary) material. In 1 Corinthians 14 the worlds of spirit and of the physical are congruent. The Spirit of God speaks through humans; other spirits may also speak, and need to be discerned. Humans might inadequately grasp the revelation of the Spirit, and this too needs to be discerned. Not only is the possibility of a spiritual/physical congruency basic to this text, it also stipulates that the discernment process can be guided by the *effect* of spiritual manifestations (as in the discussion of tongues and prophecy as valid or abused signs). 1 Corinthians 14 provides detailed instruction for the priorities, values and phenomena that might apply in the interface between spiritual and physical that is the pentecostal worship service. If it is true that divine and human, spiritual and physical, do relate dynamically to one another, then 1 Corinthians 14 is part of the New Testament instruction in the 'rules of the game' that apply in this interaction.

It is impossible at the end of this century to ignore the insistence that reality is not just physical or individual, but is also collective - social, political, racial, sexual (gender issues) etc. These realities are described and/or presupposed in almost any discussion on literary interpretation of almost any text. (e g Hollinger 1994:176) notes: 'Postmodernists believe that everything always has been and always will be political.'

He thereby understands that postmodernism does not operate as a relativisation of all previously held absolutes, but has distinct absolutes of its own that operate in its criticism.) Perhaps it is a challenge to pentecostal biblical studies (indeed, to exegetical Christian studies at large) that these realities *not* be ignored, but that at the same time they not be presupposed uncritically as they have been identified and described in the secular human sciences. A radical, alternative discipleship movement that reveres the biblical text might address the questions of society, politics, race and gender from a significantly alternative perspective to that of the current secular consensus ('correctness'). Indeed, an exegetical movement is challenged to seek to 'define' and comprehend such realities in the light of the text of Scripture to the same (and perhaps even greater) extent that they seek to understand the text in the light of these realities.

Chow's (1992) description of the patron-client relationships in Corinth, and his conclusion that Paul is offering the body-member metaphor as an alternative community model to the patron-client model, implies that radical discipleship of Jesus Christ does not leave social and political reality unaddressed or unaltered. Hurd (1983:259-262) argues that the Corinthians were actually resisting Paul's attempts to enforce the terms of the Apostolic Decree upon them, i e they were resisting the imposition of the authority upon them by the apostolic community 'establishment'. This could be interpreted as a brave stand for individual freedoms against the ever-increasing demands of ecclesiastical dominance. Wire (1990:152-158) argues that Paul was attempting to silence the women prophets of Corinth, thus ensuring that Christianity did not challenge the male dominance that prevailed in Mediterranean society in the first century. These latter two insights, however, have approached the text from an *a priori* consensus, that the widest possible range ofindividual freedoms are 'good', and that a social order in which the genders are not granted absolute equality is 'bad'. A pentecostal approach to the Scriptures might address such approaches to reality by enquiring into the statements of the text itself with regard to the issues of individual and gender 'rights'. The relationship between text and reality is thus not understood in terms of the current perception of reality judging the text (as Wolmarans 1994 suggests), but of the text defining and judging all perceptions of reality.

e. **Language**: The passing of information among the earliest Christians took place primarily on an *oral basis*. The Corinthian correspondence was clearly written against the background of numerous personal contacts between the author and the reader, some direct and others mediated (1 Cor 1:11; 16:5-7; 2 Cor 2:1-4; 13:1-2). In such a situation the readers were not dependent purely upon the written text, but could expect it to be expounded by the bearer, and up for discussion when the author visited them in person. The contemporary reader of 1 Corinthians 14 must do without this 'living commentary', and the language of the text becomes crucial.

The text refers *directly* to phenomena such as tongues and prophecy. Explanation of these words that have arisen in a non-charismatic setting have tended to describe tongues as ecstatic speech and to redefine prophecy as preaching (or to understand it as the same sort of ecstatic oracle encountered in contemporary paganism.). A reading from a charismatic perspective understands these terms as references to the glossolalia and immediate prophetic revelations that are currently evident in such a milieu. The pentecostal movement probably had its beginnings when these terms were understood and applied literally to indicate desirable and repeatable phenomena. Language in the pentecostal reading of Scripture receives the most direct possible referential emphasis: parallels in contemporary experience are sought for events and phenomena that are described directly in the text. Outside of 1 Corinthians 14, this is as true for exorcisms, healings and resurrections as for tongues, interpretation and prophecy. This is done in concert with the primitivism of the movement, by means of which it seeks to emulate in its own experience that which the first Christians experienced. Therefore pentecostal readers of Paul would agree with Hughes (1978:400): 'Whatever Spirit and Letter may mean, they must first be defined in terms of the early church and not according to modern hermeneutics.' Such an understanding and use of the language of 1 Corinthians 14 urges the pentecostal movement to promote and continually reassess its charismatic nature. As long as these references are related to experiential and dynamic elements in pentecostal life, the notion of charisma may be prevented from reverting to 'doctrines of the Holy Spirit' and continue to be descriptive of an ongoing phenomenology.

Hughes (1978:398ff) maintains that neither Paul nor the other New Testament writers understood that there was a tension between Word (letter) and Spirit in Christianity - although they may have identified such a tension in contemporary Judaism. Hughes maintains that the Damascus road experience of Paul did not drive him into tension with his Scriptures, but did drive him 'to seek after a new understanding of his Bible'. To be 'led of the Spirit' thus did not mean to be at odds with Scripture, or to experience tension when trying to harmonise Scripture and the working of the Spirit. The facility in which Peter is recorded by Luke as bringing the pentecostal experience into accord with the Old Testament prophets is evidence of this lack of tension, and numerous further examples of this facility may be found in Acts. While the eruption of the Holy Spirit onto the scene in many respects led the disciples to a new hermeneutic, it was understood to be perfectly in line with 'that which was promised'.

Reference to language also raises the question of *intertextuality*, or 'the text behind the text.' Wenham remarks about the relationship between Paul and Jesus:

> If the primary text that Paul is expounding in his writings is the text of Jesus, then instead of reading Paul's letters in isolation from the Gospels, it would be important to read them in the light of the Gospels - not falling into naive harmonisation, but recognising that Paul was above all motivated by a desire to follow Jesus.
>
> Wenham 1995:409

The epistles can thus be understood as discipleship documents: not texts that have arisen in a process of redefining Christianity for its wider mission, but texts that explore and define the implications of the discipleship that the gospels spell out, in the wider context into which the gospel is now being taken.

1 Corinthians 14 refers to the text of the Old Testament at least twice: once directly (1 Cor 14:21) and once generally (1 Cor 14:34). The original readers were better placed to understand the implications of these references than are contemporary pentecostals. The first reference deals with the aspect of 'signs', with varying interpretations being offered (see my comment above on Fee's explanation). The authority given to the law

in v 34 must obviously be understood in relation to Paul's teaching with regard to Law and grace in Romans and Galatians. Here it is used in respect to the demeanour of women, an issue which is dealt with in 1 Corinthians 11 on a strong theological (and one therefore presumes exegetical) basis.[102] The manner in which Christians of the first century used the Old Testament is the subject of much ongoing research, in which pentecostal contributions have focused particularly on the use of Joel on the day of Pentecost.[103] Apart from the background of the Old Testament, this epistle is also just one of at least four missives sent by Paul to Corinth. It therefore presupposes at least the previous knowledge of the first (1 Cor 5:9), of which we know only that it dealt with the issue of immorality among Christians.[104] Interest in the 'world of the text', if one is not merely to accept tne Ricoeurian notion that that world is not necessarily historically referential, urges the pentecostal scholar to historical and linguistic studies, in terms of culture, society, language and textual history. Writing strategies are therefore understood to have a purpose - to convey a crucial message from the author to the reader, and to invoke as many aspects of the writer's and the reader's common semiotic inventory as necessary.

f. **Teleology**: In an extrovert and radical missionary movement the appropriation of Scripture is often closely linked to *confrontation of non-believers* with the gospel of Christ. Christianity is understood as an alternative lifestyle, in beliefs, practices, essence and power. The missionary emphasis of Paul in 1 Corinthians is clear - the major problem with the Corinthian misdemeanours was that they were contradicting the witness to Christ that they had been called to bear. A missionary reading of 1 Corinthians 14 discerns the missionary heart of the author. At the end of the 20th century, when for many pentecostals the charismata have become an experiential end in themselves, 1 Corinthians 14 might be expounded with the aim of challenging the movement with its own missionary roots, evident in both this and the first century. In its wider context (1 Cor 11-14) it not only challenges the reader with the *fact* of its missionary emphasis, but also offers parameters (in terms of norms and values) which define the *nature* of a consistently Christian outreach. It *confronts* as well as informs, *directs* as well as explains. The writer appears to believe that it is imperative for the

readers, if they are to be consistent with their experience of Christ and the heritage they have received from God's covenant revelation in Israel, to love, to be rational, to pursue and test the gifts of the Spirit, and to have a heart for the salvation of unbelievers.

6.4 *Addendum*: A pentecostal reading of Romans 8

A final illustration of the application of the pentecostal hermeneutic described in this research is offered here, viz a tentative (and extremely broad) attempt to show what a pentecostal reading of a less 'charismatic' portion of the New Testament (Romans 8) might look like.

a. **Philosophy**: This reading is made from the context of a radical, Jesus-centred, witnessing, discipleship movement. This movement understands Scripture holistically, and therefore assumes that what the human author (Paul) here means by God, Spirit of God/Christ, resurrection, etc. has logical and propositional continuity with similar terminology in the rest of Scripture.[105] Romans 8 is therefore read in terms of the thought-world and phenomenology of not just the Pauline *corpus*, but of the entire canon of Scripture.

This community also adopts a primitivist position, in that it understands itself to be involved in the ongoing history of God - an extension in this century of biblical history, with its accompanying experiential elements and phenomenology. Therefore it interprets the Pauline texts in the sense that 'Paul's story is also my story'. The pentecostal reader is as involved in God's ongoing history as was Paul. A pentecostal reading of Romans 8 therefore occurs in the context of a charismatic community, in conscious pneumatic continuity (Ervin) with the first-century community. In writing to the Romans Paul is understood to have been addressing a charismatic community who attributed a pre-understanding of charismatic phenomena to his writings, particularly on the Spirit of God. They were a prophethood of believers (Stronstad).

b. **Process**: It is presupposed that the pentecostal reader is both personally and communally involved in an ongoing process of encounter with God - speaking in tongues, prophesying, ministering healing and deliverance in the power of the Holy Spirit (Tarr).

A pentecostal reading will begin with historical investigation, including the author's situation and intent. Romans 8 appears to be the culmination of Paul's soteriological argument in that epistle. In writing to the Romans he appears to be presenting a treatise in which he introduces, to a church which he did not found, the gospel of which he is not ashamed. Although usually included with Galatians under the heading 'soteriological epistles', it is far more irenic and less emotional than Galatians. One appears to catch a glimpse in Romans of Paul the scholar[106]. However, pentecostals will insist that this scholar is still the charismatic Paul of the Lukan account, as well as of e g 1 Cor 2 & 14, and of 2 Cor 12.

Noting this historical context, a pentecostal reading will attempt to analyze the text in its context, viz by placing the chosen portion in the context of the author's wider argument. In Romans 8 Paul concludes that the person who is saved by grace, through faith (Rom 1-5), and who has identified in baptism (understood by pentecostals as a step of discipleship) with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 6), will overcome in the battle between the old nature (the flesh) and the regenerate spirit (Rom 7) by consciously 'walking in the Spirit'. Rm 8:1-17 deals with the necessity, demands and implications of this walking. Rm 8:18-30 is a discussion of the eschatological implications of the indwelling presence and manifestation of the Spirit of God in the believer.[107] Rm 8:31-39 emphasises the aspect of promise in the Spirit's indwelling: the Spirit which pours out the love of God in our hearts and assures us of hope (Rm 5:5) is assurance that, in the midst of opposition and persecution (as Christian messengers) the love of God will be ever present in and with us, sustaining us.

In setting the text in its historical and textual context a pentecostal reader will be following the same steps as an evangelical reader, viz the usual preliminaries of the

historical-grammatical approach. The difference between such a 'scientific' process and the pentecostal lies at this point more in the 'why' of using the method than the 'how'. The pentecostal aim is to enter as fully as possible into the mind of the author, to reconstruct as closely as possible the ambience of the first-century missionary and charismatic situation, and to identify as closely as possible with the spirit and dynamic of that first-century community. The New Testament text is understood to present a perspective which is at odds with (alternative to) that contemporary social and philosophical consensus in which the pentecostal disciple is a pilgrim. The historical and analytical steps in the hermeneutical process are therefore aimed at identifying that alternative dynamic and perspective as it operated in its own historical context; then at using it to promote ongoing experience of the God whom both communities (first and twentieth century) have encountered. Understanding the originating and initial interpreting context of the text will help the contemporary pentecostal apply the text in terms of altering thoughts, practices and values, and in terms of promoting valid participation in the ongoing history of God with humanity.

Rm 8:1-17, when approached thus, might produce a number of insights that are of particular application by and to a pentecostal reader. Essentially Paul is describing the standing of people who live 'according to the Spirit' (v 5), who 'have the mind/way of thinking of the Spirit' (v 6), who are 'in the Spirit (v 9), in whom 'the Spirit dwells' (v 9), who 'put to death by the Spirit' the deeds of the body (v 13), who are 'led by the Spirit of God' (v 14), who have 'received the Spirit' (v 15), with whose spirits 'the Spirit agrees/testifies' (v 16).[108] Bearing in mind that not all of these attributions to the Spirit can be brought directly into association with the Pentecostal experience of Acts 2, which pentecostals claim to have experienced for themselves, neither can they be totally divorced from the charismatic experience of the author and his intended readers. A pentecostal reader will note that Paul's experience of the Spirit of God transcended notions of inner guidance, illumination and conscience. It included glossolalia (1 Cor 14:18), many works of power and healing (as recorded in Acts, and alluded to in 1 Cor 2:4), revelations (Ac 16:9-10; 18:9; 2 Cor 12:1-7) and divine interventions (as in the shipwreck and on Melita). For such a person to refer to the leading, witness and

indwelling of the Spirit would surely imply that the reader should understand more than the traditional sense of 'inner prompting' assigned to the Spirit in Romans 8.[109] If the 'sons of God' are those who are 'led by the Spirit of God', then a pentecostal reading would understand that leading to occur in a charismatic sense as well as in terms of inner prompting. The 'sons of God' could thus expect to be marked by accompanying charismatic phenomena (in pentecostal parlance, 'be accompanied by signs following') such as healings, exorcisms, inspired ('anointed' in pentecostal terms) witness, dreams, visions, prophesies, etc. The person who 'overcomes' the flesh, who walks in faith without condemnation, with whose spirit the Spirit witnesses, is not just a person led into Christian ethical behaviour by an inner understanding originating in the Spirit of God (although obviously such a partial perspective on Rm 8:1-17 is valid as far as it goes). It is a person who demonstrates on an ongoing basis the powerful working of God in their life. To be 'heirs of God', and 'joint-heirs of Christ' (v 17), to a pentecostal reader, could thus imply more than expecting a reward for faithfulness, and partaking in eternal life: it implies a certain realised eschatology, a 'living in the Spirit' in which the power of God is demonstrated (at the initiative and impulse of the Spirit) in authority and power over evil, human brokenness and ignorance.

Such a reading would not invalidate the more traditional understanding that Paul is referring to the soteriological role of the Spirit in this portion, which issues in ethical living. However, it does insist that a pentecostal reading that presupposes a pentecostal Paul and pentecostal recipients could also include a wider - much wider -sense of the Spirit's activity than just the soteriological.

Rm 8:18-30 focuses on eschatology. It is noted that Paul's summary of his gospel in the Roman epistle excludes a formal ecclesiology and eschatology,[110] and does not therefore reflect the 'systematic theology' of the apostle in its entirety. However, this short section is the most forward-looking portion of the epistle. And the Spirit of God again plays no small role. Christians are referred to as 'having' the first-portion of the Spirit of God (perhaps similar to the 'pledge' of 2 Cor 1:22), and as waiting anxiously and longingly for the resurrection of the body (which is an effect or result of the

indwelling of the Spirit - v 11). The Spirit comes to help the believer in weaknesses (v 26), and even intercedes for them when they are not able to pray effectively or purposefully (v 26). In this section Christians are seen in terms of their eschatological expectation, for despite the powerful presence and manifestation of the Spirit of God in and through them, they are nevertheless not at home in this world, and are subject to earthly suffering since they are embodied in the flesh of this present creation. Where a pentecostal reading of Romans 8 would find in vv 1-17 a focus on the Spirit's *power*, in vv 17-30 they are comforted by the reality of the Spirit's inner presence, intercessory activity,[111] and future *promise*.

While the pentecostal movement in the first-world appears largely to have lost its sense of eschatological imminence, this is not true of the wider movement in the two-thirds world. Pentecostals who still remember the movement as it was before 1980 in the west, will also remember the strong emphasis that predominated at that time, on Christ as the Coming King. A pentecostal reading that functions within the apocalyptical ethos that many believe *should* (prescriptive) still be descriptive of pentecostalism, will see in this portion the assuring role of the Holy Spirit and the charismata. The Spirit assures, intercedes, and finally brings back to life the body of the believer. The activity of the Spirit (powerful, visible, charismatic) in and around the embattled and often suffering believer is a pledge, a guarantee from God that Jesus Christ will return to fetch his people, and that the new order will be one without groaning, sickness or bondage (the elements of human existence the Spirit is here depicted as confronting).

Rom 8:31-39 focuses upon the Christian's experience of opposition and persecution in this age.[112] This was something that Paul understood well, and his own experiences are well-documented (as in Luke's account in Acts, in 2 Timothy, and in 2 Cor 10-13). A pentecostal reader would note that Paul was not merely opposed and persecuted for *being* a Christian, but that opposition was aimed against his *mission* as a Christian. This opposition even came at time from within the Christian community itself. Like Paul, Pentecostals are, generally speaking, acquainted with hatred, rejection and opposition. As an extrovert missionary movement, where they have not found this reception in and

around their own locality, they have encountered it in more remote areas where they believe they have been sent to witness. Obviously they have not been the only Christian martyrs of this century, but have provided a large bulk of those who have suffered for the Christian gospel. In South Africa Afrikaans pentecostals have suffered for accepting and urging believers' baptism, thereby being seen as deserters from the peoples' religion offered by the Afrikaans churches; English pentecostals have been scorned by their peers for speaking in tongues and being over-emotional in their liturgy and witness; Black pentecostals have been opposed by liberationists and apartheid operatives alike, for attempting (like many Anabaptists) an apolitical stance in a revolutionary situation; Indian pentecostals have been overtly persecuted for converting, by their former Hindu or Muslim co-religionists. When one takes the global picture into account, pentecostals are acquainted with suffering - not purely as the product of their social milieu (repression or oppression), but because their extrovert witness, and the unusual phenomenology of the charismata, brings it upon them. In a religious context in which church and state are considered partners, persecution would be a reality only in political or military defeat or aggression against the national/tribal entity itself. However, pentecostals share the Anabaptist perception that the world system ('this age') is the enemy of the Christian, and that perseccution and opposition can therefore be encountered anywhere in society, even among one's tribal/national peers - indeed, even among the members of one's own household. A pentecostal reading of Rm 8:31-39 therefore sees far more than comfort offered to those who sorrow and suffer because of human brokenness - it sees hope and assurance offered to those who are labouring for the Master, and receiving sticks and stones because of their choice so to do.

A pentecostal reading of Romans 8 therefore sees in life in the Spirit not only the presence and inner working of the Spirit, but also the dynamic healing, delivering and revelatory charismatic manifestations. It sees in the tensions between an apocalyptic movement and the consensus that operates in this age the assurance and comfort of the dynamic witness, intercession and eventual quickening of the Holy Spirit. And as pentecostal readers suffer opposition and persecution in proclaiming the message to which they are called by the Spirit, they find comfort in the certainty that God is on

their side, with them in all circumstances, as made evident by the activity of the Spirit in their midst.

c. **Practice**: *Implementation* of this text by a pentecostal reader implies initially that the content and message of the text reflects an absolute, whereas the secular context, milieu and consensus in which the text is being read is relative. Therefore pentecostal implementation maintains that the message of the text is crucial, and that it confronts all other realities. Three alternatives 'realities' offer themselves to the three sections of this text. Over against the possibility of 'walking in the Spirit' is the potential of 'following the flesh': and the message of the surrounding social consensus, in both the first and twentieth centuries, is that such following is viable, credible and desirable. Against the certainty of future redemption, witnessed to and interceded for by the indwelling Spirit of God, is the secular notion that material existence and the structures/values of this age are of vital, indeed crucial, importance. And the reality of persecution and opposition as depicted in the final section confirms that believers are hated (but victorious) pilgrims and aliens in the secular consensus around them. *Pentecostal implementation begins when the reader accepts the depiction of reality offered by the text, as opposed to that assumed by the secular consensus in which they live*. It continues as the reader makes decisions and develops habits which are based upon such acceptance.

Demonstration occurs when the pentecostal reader exhibits the full charismatic understanding of 'walking in the Spirit', accompanied by the visible and potent manifestation of the charismata. It is also found when the reader lives a life that is clearly based upon alternative criteria (values, hopes, power) to that of their secular peers, because of a real eschatological expectation and hope. It culminates in acceptance of the judgement and condemnation that the secular consensus heaps upon it, as readers gladly suffer the opposition and persecution that comes their way because of the urgency of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Demonstration of a pentecostal reading of Romans 8 is therefore epitomised in the reader's decision for and implementation of a radical alternative missionary lifestyle as a disciple of Jesus Christ,

in the power of the Spirit. Such living shows that the pentecostal interpretation of the text is *viable* in its contemporary setting.

Realisation is linked to the 'making real' of the promise of the text. It is associated more with what God will do than with what the reader does. Realisation in a pentecostal reading of Romans 8 includes the appropriation of the benefits of 'walking in the Spirit', of the Spirit's powerful intercession, of the comforting power of God's love and presence in times of persecution and opposition. The alternative reality that the pentecostal reader espies in the message of the text, and that they commit themselves to in commitment to demonstrating a radical alternative lifestyle, expresses itself in the manifest presence of God with and among his suffering people. The promise of 'who can be against us?', of 'more than conquerors', of 'nothing can separate us from the love of God?', becomes realised in the existential experience of the reader. Rejection, suffering and persecution become victory.

This has not been an attempt to make a detailed pentecostal exegesis of Romans 8, although such a project is obviously worth making. It is a cursory indication of the distinctiveness that might be found in a pentecostal reading of a text from the New Testament that is not as blatantly charismatic as 1 Corinthians 14.

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The findings of this chapter have indicated how crucial pentecostal community, experience and practice are to a pentecostal interpretation, and how crucial a distinctively pentecostal method of interpretation is to the continuation of the pentecostal movement as a dynamic and authentic movement of God. It has attempted to illustrate both the descriptive (how it is happening, or has happened in eg. other revival movements in history) and prescriptive (how it should happen) tasks involved in formulating and applying a pentecostal hermeneutic. I am convinced that pentecostal consideration of the hermeneutical challenge to the movement can continue both to learn from other systems, and to inform them from its own unique perspective and

experience.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 6

1. The most significant scholarly South African pentecostal contributions are Möller 1975, Bezuidenhout 1980 and Fourie 1990.

2. Beardslee (1994:11-12) points out that the Corinthians had failed to understand the implications of radical transformation for behaviour.

3. Fee (1987:689), referring to 1 Cor 14:26-33, says: 'If this material were in a non-polemical letter, it would look very much like instruction on the regulation of spiritual gifts. Its appearance here, however, indicates that, even though instructional, it is primarily correctional, especially in light of the argument that has preceded and the rhetoric that follows...' Bezuidenhout (1980:336) notes that Paul is not dealing with the gifts here in terms of doctrine, but of practice, drawn from him by problems in this area in the Corinthian church.

4. Although Paul terms them προφήτης (vs. 29, 32) this seems to be merely a convenient term - he is speaking to the 'all' who may prophesy (vs. 31) - cf. Grudem 1978:237-241).

5. It is the contention of pentecostal scholars such as Stronstad (1997:74) and Menzies (1991:227-228) that Luke's description of an apparently distinct class of prophet in Luke-Acts is in reality a selection of examples of individuals of every strata of discipleship who were also prophets, and that Luke was in reality describing the total new covenant people of God as a community of prophets. Others (e g Horton 1934:173-176 and Pytches 1993:10ff) make a clear distinction between believers who prophesy and those who occupy the prophetic office as mentioned in Eph 4:11.

6. The first written communication is referred to in 1 Cor 5:9. Obviously there may have been other written communications of which we are no longer aware, but the internal evidence of the canonical Corinthian correspondence appears to indicate at least four altogether, of which 1 Cor is the second. 2 Cor is the fourth, with Paul mentioning a letter written in 'tears and anguish' in 2 Cor 2:4 which was probably written between 1 Cor and 2 Cor.

7. Penney (1997:37ff) deals with the question of the relationship between Old Testament and New Testament prophets and prophecy. In response to the assertion that there is no distinction at all (and that therefore contemporary prophesies cannot be legitimate since the canon is closed (:37)), he maintains that the Old Testament demonstrates a variety of prophetic experiences, only some of which provided canonical material (:38ff). His distinctions are similar to those of Pytches (1993:12-17), who speaks of 'high-level' Old Testament prophecy (that with absolute authority, which is incorporated in the canon), and 'low-level' prophecy (such as that uttered by the 70 elders in Moses' time), which is not thus incorporated. Hill (1979:193-195) maintains that the tendency to label certain critical voices from the church as 'prophetic' (he mentions Martin Luther King and Trevor Huddleston as examples) is to identify the notion 'prophetic' with Old Testament types, and that New Testament prophecy is of an essentially different type. The parallels between Old and New Testament prophecy may not therefore be as closely linked to content and authority as to other elements such as mode of reception, the sacrificial nature of the prophetic vocation and the 'otherness' of prophetic insights and lifestyle. The description of these elements by an Old Testament theologian such as Eichrodt (1961:309-391) is illuminating to pentecostal conceptualisation of charismatic living. This is particularly true if Christians are called to be a community of prophets as argued by Stronstad 1997.

8. Mckay (1994:27), speaking of his own charismatic odyssey, reports: 'Of course, the mere experience of such phenomena as tongues, prophecy, supernormal knowledge and healing was in itself no guarantee that these were the same gifts as those known to the earliest Christians, but at least the possibility was now worth exploring, and the further I looked, the more convinced I became that I was indeed sharing experiences of the same genre as those, not only of the early Christians, but also of the Old Testament prophets and of Jesus himself.'

9. The critique of reader-response theories in chapter 4 should be noted here, particularly the subjectivizing dangers, and the caution that Biblical texts cannot simply be treated as literature, particularly not by pentecostals who have regularly regarded them as propositional material, in the form of a manual for personal and corporate discipleship.

10. Aune (1983:200-210) considers this to be a *theological* dictum which was never empirically attested: Fee (1987:694-695) states it was potentially possible for all to prophecy, but this does not mean that they would or did do so. Fee interprets the verb δύνασθε to mean you (pl.) *may* all prophesy, an interpretation that does not do justice to its dynamics, since the verb was rarely confused in that way in Greek writings. Penney (1997:54-55) maintains that prophecy serves in 1 Cor 12 & 14 as the *sine qua non* of spiritual gifts in general, and that the language of 1 Cor 14:31 does not intend that all can prophesy but rather that all can demonstrate some spiritual gift or other. Giesriegl (1989:143) understands that prophecy at this stage was not limited to certain individuals, but that all assembly members could prophesy: indeed, were urged to do so. Engelsen (1970:170-171) denies that this is implied in the text at all.

11. My own involvement in the discussion has been mentioned above, viz Clark 1988.

12. cf Ervin 1985:28: 'The incarnation makes truth personal - "I am the truth." It is not simply grasping the kerygma cognitively. It is being apprehended by Jesus Christ...' This context makes clear what Ervin means by 'cognitive' apprehension of Scripture: receiving the content of Scripture purely or primarily as intellectual content. I would prefer to use the term more restrictively, viz cognitive apprehension of Scripture would mean being confronted by its immediately intelligible content, and I would maintain that this should always be the initial (if not primary) step in any person's encounter with Scripture in pentecostalism.

13. Which is why Thomas (1994: 55) refers to the role of the Spirit as being difficult to reduce to 'vague talk of illumination'.

14. Many pentecostals are therefore unlikely to find much common ground with the reader-response theory of Fish, who, as noted in a previous chapter, insists that there is *no* meaningful content *apart from* the community's interpretation - pentecostals will insist that the interpretation of any community must be continually confronted by the apparent literal intent of the text itself.

15. An Indian pastor (who also is the Principal of the AFM of SA's Bible College in Durban) ministering in a largely Hindu community in Tongaat, Kwa-Zulu/Natal, tells that he and his elders deal with cases of severe demon-possession virtually on a daily basis. In this context it becomes unthinkable not to experience the charismatic presence and power of the Holy Spirit. While conducting a seminar in central Mozambique I was interrupted by a demonic manifestation with which the group dealt while scarcely raising an eyebrow.

16. I hesitate to mention as respected a scholar as Hollenweger here. However, not only does his paper on 'colonial evangelism' (1995) lack the detailed insights and experience of the terrain that is common knowledge about Livingstone in Southern Africa, but his suggestions concerning the incorporation of indigenous medicines, spirituality and medicine into African pentecostalism would be vehemently rejected by the vast majority of Black classical pentecostals themselves (cf Anderson 1992:75-76).

17. Studies such as Aune (1983), Klauck 1994 and Clark 1997b, describe a 1st century spirituality in the Mediterranean world that exhibits substantial parallels to many aspects of so-called 'New Age' teaching in the late twentieth-century West.

18. Interesting here is Hollenweger's (1982) imaginative reconstruction of the social situation in Corinth and the way the community received the letters of Paul. Frör (1994) has provided a similar but more detailed imaginative setting for the reception of and response to Paul's letters. Hurd (1983) - to be discussed later - maintains that the exchange of letters between Paul and the Corinthians was rather hostile, and posits that the nature of the written questions to Paul (to which he replies in 1 Cor 7:1-11:16, and 1 Cor 12:1-14:40) was aggressive, demanding to know why Paul was suddenly demanding more of them (in the first letter dealing e g with the immoral man) than when he was present.

19. Hunt (1996:86ff) argues from 1 Cor 2:6-16 that Paul understood the community at Corinth to be an 'inspired' community, particularly in so far as the Holy Spirit works in the community in general to reveal in and to them the wisdom of God (which is an alternative wisdom to that of their age). 'God inspires not a select few but the church as a whole through the endowment of God's own searching Spirit... Paul's notion [is] that the Spirit available to himself, the apostle and founder of the Corinthian church, is also available to all believers.' (:92) He concludes (:138-139) that the abuses of the gifts of the Spirit, the lack of unity, and their self-assertion deny this reality. Paul's argument with the Corinthians is thus consistent with his entire approach to ethics and order: your *actions* are not consistent with the reality of what you *are*.

20. Pentecostal preaching is noted for highlighting this element of Biblical narrative. The change in the paradigm of understanding that occurs when God appears or speaks is illustrated in innumerable portions, e g after Adam and Eve had Fallen; when Noah received notice of the Flood; in the call of Abraham; at the burning bush; in the case of Elijah in depression under the tree, etc etc. Pentecostal preaching has generally highlighted the encounter aspects of these narratives, the repeatability of their essential aspects, and the radical difference brought about in the perceptions, state, attitudes and achievements of the humans involved. Beardslee (1994:11-12) notes that all of the problems arising in Corinth were held together in the Corinthian failure to note that 'faith works a radical transformation in life, a transformation that makes a change in how one actually behaves.'

21. Clark 1995b and Clark 1997b were both directly evinced by the scope of this challenge in and to the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA in the 1990's. Theologians and church leaders have been challenged to clearly spell out a biblical paradigm for understanding and receiving immediate revelation and experiences from God. This is not the first time in pentecostal history that this has happened. In the 1920's the *Späde Reën* group argued for ecstatic prophecy that was above criticism, while in the 1950's the visit of William Branham to this country raised similar challenges - his followers declared his every word to be the authoritative word of a prophet.

22. Fee's pentecostal commentary on 1 Cor 12:1-3 takes note that Paul sincerely believed that idols represented demonic spirits who could actually speak (Fee 1987:574-582). Pentecostal experience of occult opposition to the gospel parallels that of the early church as related by Luke (cf Klauck 1994). To 'test the spirits' therefore entails the ability to discern whether the Spirit of God is being revealed, or another spirit entirely. Where scepticism exists concerning the reality of personal demonic entities, some commentaries prefer to relegate Paul's concern about demons to his 'primitive'(e g Anderson-Scott 1961:31-33) world-view, or to ascribe the need for testing to be based upon aberrations of the human 'spirit', e g incorrect doctrine and/or commitment to heresy (representative are: Klauck 1984:86 refers to gnosticism; Witherington 1995:256-257 refers to 'the agency of the individual human who does the speaking'). Aune 1983:257 maintains that Paul is referring to the typical ecstatic or trance-related utterances of pagan oracles. This would be in line with contemporary pentecostal missionary experience of such oracles, as well as with the Lukan narrative.

23. Hurd (1983:92-94) maintains that Paul was responding here to written questions from the Corinthians. He identifies two such sections in 1 Corinthians, viz 7:1-11:16 and 12:1-14:40. He identifies a number of other sections as being prompted by oral information reaching him, viz 1:10-5:8; 5:13b-6:11; 11:17-34.

24. The term 'gifts of utterance (or speaking or inspiration)' is used in the pentecostal movement to denote tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy (cf Horton 1934:32, 143; Möller 1975:55-56).

25. e g Aune 1983, Bezuidenhout 1980, Crane 1962, Dantzenberg 1975, Fourie 1990, Gillespie 1994, Grudem 1978, Hill 1979, Robeck 1987, Yocum 1976.

26. Corroboration of and discussion of these pentecostal axioms is central to the discussion in the rest of this chapter.

27. This is undoubtedly a dated source in many respects, but is also a classic in that it expresses the typical historical-critical approach to texts that proceeded from the 19th century heyday of Biblical criticism. As can be seen in the comparison of commentaries made in this research, the position of this commentary on a number of points has been maintained by numerous later twentieth century scholars (tongues as

'ecstatic' and prophecy as 'preaching' being just two that can be named here).

28. Other examples of this sort of understanding of prophecy are: *Twentieth Century New Testament*: 'the gift of preaching' (1 Cor 14:2); *The New Testament -An American Translation* (Goodspeed): 'inspired preaching' (1 Cor 14:2); *Berkley Version of the New Testament*: 'to give testimony' (1 Cor 14:24); Hill (1979:213) who after a long discussion of the pentecostal argument for charismatic immediacy in prophecy, nevertheless concludes that those 'who have grasped the meaning of Scripture, perceived its powerful relevance to the life of the individual, the Church and society, and declare that message fearlessly ... are the true successors ... of the prophets of the New Testament'; Gillespie (1994:237ff) acknowledges its immediacy, but sees it primarily as exposition of Scripture followed by discussion, ie. primarily kerygmatic and didactic - he maintains the prophets were the first Christian theologians. Witherington (1995:280-281) prefers to identify its essence in its immediacy, and comes closer to the charismatic understanding of the gift, distinct from teaching and preaching. Vines (1979:226-227): 'Today the gift of prophecy is the gift which the Lord gives to a man so that he can expound the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit so that the saints might be built up and lost people might be saved.' Engelsen throughout speaks of prophecy as being similar to tongues in that it was 'ecstatic', 'overwhelming' and a 'compulsion', and defines it thus: 'To announce or proclaim what has been revealed to one is to prophesy. How this revelation is received is not explained. The situation suggests an enlightenment about some truth and the inspiration to speak.' (1970:170)

29. E g Am 3:8: 'The lion has roared- who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken- who can but prophesy?'

30. Stronstad (1997:61ff) argues that the doctrine of the 'prophethood of all believers' is articulated by Luke, but does not originate with him. 'It was first articulated when Moses expressed the earnest desire that all God's people would be prophets (Num. 11.25-29). It is then given biblical definition and delineation in an ancient oracle of the prophet Joel (2.28-32). Finally, it is inaugurated through the prophetic ministry of Jesus.' (:61) Pytches (1993:10-27) uses similar biblical data (in greater detail) to arrive at similar conclusions to Stronstad. Menzies (1991:279) concludes that '... in Luke's perspective the Spirit ... transforms the entire Christian community into a band of prophets.' Hunt (1996:141-144) maintains that inspiration is evident in all believers, accordiug to Paul, since all have the Spirit: the Christian community is thus an inspired community.

31. I have discussed this background in Clark 1997b, with particular reference to the Isis cult and Dionysus (:5). Paul deals in 1 Cor 11 with two elements closely related to Dionysian revels: women 'ecstatics' and the abuse of wine. The immediate juxtaposition may be coincidental. Aune(1983) has provided detailed description of the type of oracles present in the Graeco-Roman world (:23-80), and agrees with Wendland, Weiss, Alizon Schweizer, Lührmann and Conzelmann that in 1 Cor 12:2-3 Paul is referring to 'pagan religious experiences of possession trance' (:257, and his endnote 64).

32. Fee (1987:578): 'Paul scorns idols as mute because they cannot hear and answer prayer; nor can they speak... But he has also argued earlier that the mute idols represent demons (10:20-21) - who can and do speak through their devotees.'

33. 1 Cor 11:5-16; 14:33b-35 - as opposed to their conduct in the rites of Aphrodite; perhaps also in the veneration of Apollo, where many women were involved in ecstatic oracular practices; and in the rites of Isis, which were conducted by priestesses. Bezuidenhout (1980:266-267) notes the manner in which Christian prophecy was expected to differ radically from the oracle of paganism: in being self-controlled, not ecstatic; and in not being induced (by spiritual techniques) but being a revelation from God, initiated by the Holy Spirit.

34. I-J Kim (1995) has described the contrast between Korean cultural identity and the presuppositions underlying the American missionary impulse. J Ma (1997) and W Ma (1997) have described the peculiar understanding among certain groups in the Northern Philippines of pentecostal reality in terms of their own (previously animistic) world-views.

35. Klauck (1994:100) argues that Ac 19:18 shows that it was Christians in Ephesus who burnt their books of magic. If this is so, it is not certain if these were practices from which they had never been separated at conversion, or whether for some reason they had reverted to them (backsliding). It should also be

noted that Paul deals expressly with issues of 'spiritual warfare' in both the Ephesian correspondence (6:10-20) and in 2 Corinthians (10:3-6). However, in the Corinthian correspondence Paul emphasises the necessity for discerning between the power of the flesh and the power of the Spirit, whereas the message to the Ephesians appears far more confident of their ability to war in the Spirit.

36. The fact that prophecy was normal in the earliest centuries of Christianity is of course crucial to a movement whose primitivistic motif drives it to seek to reacquire the dynamic of that original situation. Wessels (1997) sketches the background against which Joel prophesies, and interprets the promise of that prophecy to indicate a situation which contrasts with it: 'It is one thing to have prosperous conditions in the land... It is, however, a different matter when a people who realises that their very existence is an act of Yahweh's grace - the one who called them into existence - have to go without any communication and revelation from him as far as the spiritual dimension is concerned. People in a relationship with Yahweh have to communicate with him on a regular basis.' (:62) Therefore it should be normal, on the basis of Joel's prophecy, that prophecy take place among the new covenant people of God on a regular basis. Hattingh (1997:160), referring directly to the charismatic manifestation of the Spirit in pentecostal liturgy, says: 'Biblical theocratisation takes place when God's will is realised by the Holy Spirit in and through the lives of the whole assembly. The Holy Spirit not only enables God's will to be done in the liturgy, but also protects it from lopsidedness. It is only the working of the Holy Spirit which can prevent degeneration into a mechanical sacramentalism, or into an objective intellectualism, or a subjective existentialism.' Robeck (1985c:111) says of Irenaeus '... he was convinced of the absolute necessity for spiritual gifts, including prophetic gifts, within the ongoing life of the Church' despite the fact that he (Irenaeus) was well aware of false prophecies emanating from gnostics and montanists alike (:104-109). Joel, the apostle Paul, one of the most influential church Fathers, and contemporary pentecostal teachers, therefore all confirm that prophecy is or ought to be a normal part of the Christian experience and liturgy.

37. Pytches (1993:149-222) has provided an historical overview of prophetic movements and groups during the petiod from the immediate post-apostolic church to the time of Edward Irving. He includes Anthony the Hermit, Novatianists, the Cathari of Carthage, mediaeval mystics, prophets among the Huguenots, the North German prophetic Anabaptists, Ranters, Lollards, Quakers, and others. Robeck 1997:72ff describes the decline of prophecy in the earl:' church and discusses the reasons for it (tension between many of the prophecies and the norm of the developing canon). Penney (1997:76ff) describes the dwindling stream of prophecy from the 3rd century onward, and maintains that the fading was due not only to Montanist excesses, but also that 'prophecy was taken up into the emerging hierarchies and offices: a trend evident in Cyprian.' (:79)

38. Lietzmann (1961:200) sees these accusations as essential strategy for their opponents.

39. Pytches (1993:139-140) considers that prophetic or 'revival' Christianity is the norm, and that the religion that develops from it and eventually stifles it is actually the real 'alternative'. (Perhaps this perspective could affect the notion of pentecostal self-understanding as a 'radical alternative' religion, and allow the movement to perceive other forms of Christianity as the 'alternative' stream?). Pytches' perspective is all the more radical when one considers that he is writing from an episcopalian perspective - he is an Anglican bishop.

40. Fee 1987:652-667 presents this with great clarity from a pentecostal perspective. The crux for Paul is intelligibility (prophecy) as opposed to utterances that are not intelligible (tongues), but does so in the context of the liturgy. Therefore the issue in 1 Cor 14 is not the *legitimacy* of either, but the practicality in that context.

41. Conzelmann (1975:233 and 246) shares with Engelsen (1970 - throughout the work) the notion that both tongues and prophesy were ecstatic phenomena (Conzelmann refers to the πνευματικοί as ecstatics - 1975:246). It is not clear whether either is working with a less technical understanding of ecstasy than one usually encounters in discussion of such phenomena, or whether they are deriving their understanding from how these phenomena operated in the Greek and Roamn pagan religions. If the latter is the case, then there is in their commentary a lack of understanding of the radical difference between early Christian charismatic activity and pagan spirituality, as set out by e g Klauck 1994.

42. The UBS Greek text associates it with v 34, probably by analogy with Paul's argument concerning women prophets in chapter 11.

43. One might compare the rationally comprehensible mode and content of the Old Testament oracles with the ecstatic and unintelligible oracles of the prophets of the Canaanite religion. Although he maintains that it basically functioned ecstatically, Eichrodt (1961:323) says of the early prophetic movement in Israel: '... [it] was determined through and through by the distinctive character of the Yahweh religion as a historical faith, and that in spite of the similarity in outward form it was fundamentally distinct from the parallel phenomena among the non-Israelite peoples.' Aune (1983:87-88) lists (from Crenshaw) the criteria by means of which false prophets were identified in the Old Testament. These include message-centred criteria, individual-centred criteria, and chronological criteria. However, none was totally unambivalent, which meant that false prophecy increased while genuine prophecy waned. The point is that the content of the prophecy actually mattered in Israel, and there were penalties involved for false prophecy.

44. It is noticeable here how the ultimate Christian spirituality (in the community context), viz charismatic prophecy, is juxtaposed with rationality and intelligibility. Paul says little, if anything, in this discussion about either faith or feelings (sensations or affections). The very specific parameters that he sets for discerning the true nature of Christian love (1 Cor 13) and for the effect of prophecy (comfort, exhortation and edification), leads the reader to conclude that Paul was not prepared to allow discernment of either sentiments or spiritual gifts to be guided by vague criteria.

45. Boone (1996:129) maintains that pentecostalism, in its patterns of worship, is becoming assimilated to mainline protestant forms. He goes on to discuss the manner in which a revisioning of its own distinctives might save pentecostals from the consequences of this, citing singing, prayer, testimony, sermon and 'altar services' (not a term used in South Africa) as elements of ritual that might be reappraised. His emphasis on ritual elements may explain the absence of the charismata in his discussion, although he does distinguish between priestly and shamenistic (sic) ritual. He argues that the latter is closer to the pentecostal type, emphasising transformation and being open to (indeed, directed by and also toward) spiritual encounter (:138). Poloma (1989:196) remarks: 'The Assemblies of God continues to profess a belief in the operation of prophecy today, but it is a practice which is in jeopardy in many congregations. As Pentecostals seek to become more like their evangelical cousins, prophecy is replaced by preaching and the prophet by a well-trained pastor.'

46. Their are probably a number of contributing reasons for this. As the third/fourth generation movement loses its aggressive missionary character, less emphasis is laid upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of the gifts of the Spirit. The rise of dominant personalities, with the media hype which sometimes surrounds them, has led to an undervaluing of the charismata in the life of the common people. The shocking abuses which have accompanied the 'charismatic' ministry of some members and leaders has led to doubts about the efficacy and authenticity of the gifts. The general dwindling of fervour in a third/fourth generation movement is probably also a major contributory factor, as is growing emphasis upon shorter worship services, de-emphasis of assembly prayer-meetings, and the value placed upon 'entertaining' forms of ministry. Scholarly research into the phenomena is growing, with the work of Poloma (1989) focusing on this as one issue in the development of a North American denomination. A doctoral student at Unisa (Christo van der Berg) who is also a pastor of the AFM of SA, is currently focusing on the discrepancy between *teaching* on spiritual gifts in that denomination, and the actual *situation* in the liturgy of the church (dwindling charismatic manifestations).

47. Pytches (1993:295-302) offers discussion on the nature of the charismata and the functioning of the human brain. He does not mention Virkler's work, but does take note of the difference in function between the two hemispheres of the brain. However, he notes that use of the right hemisphere can be practised by all, linking it most strongly to the attitude of a child, rather than to 'analytical' versus 'intuitive' perception. Möller (1975:151-191) has produced (from his own training and background in psychology) a comprehensive discussion and evaluation of attempts to link glossolalia with functions and dysfunctions of the human brain.

48. Beardslee (1994:142) sees in the meditative and ecstatic practices of Bhuddism and Hinduism, as practised in the West today, the same challenge to the church as the (ecstatic) phenomenon of tongues

was in Paul's day. In both cases there is an ecstatic, inward-looking phenomenon which, while not invalid as an expression of spirituality, does not meet the criteria of extrovert witness, nor of the task of mutual edification. The similarity between tongues and Eastern spirituality cannot be maintained, however, if the pentecostal assertion against scholars such as Beardslee is upheld: that none of the Christian spirituality discussed by Paul, and prevalent in the early church community, was *ecstatic*.

49. Virkler (1990:87) presents a full page in which New Testament Christianity's and New Age's values and world-view are set against each other in columns. These contrasts offer the normal distinctions between the monistic and pan-theistic world-view of the East and the monotheistic system of the Bible. However, at two crucial points his distinctions amount to little distinction at all. Under the heading *Intuitive Development*, he describes the voice of God as flowing through the heart and spirit of man as 'intuitive thoughts, burdens and impressions'. This is similar to the New Age notion he describes, although he ascribes a different role and purpose to it. And *Visionary abilities* are described as being recognised by both systems as 'a creative ability within man'. These are of course the kernel of his thesis concerning hearing God, that such hearing is initiated by humans, is generally intuitive, and can be enhanced and developed by application of human creativity. This does not accord well with the notion of immediate prophecy, initiated by God 'as He wills', and although being conveyed through the human vehicle, nevertheless owes everything to the working of grace and not of human creativity.

50. Penney (1997:41) notes that Jeremiah makes a distinction between true prophecy and the visionary sort (Jer 23:28). However, he also notes that Jeremiah himself received visionary forms of revelation. His contemporary, Ezekiel, was one of the most visionary prophets. Perhaps the historical context of Jeremiah, and the nature of false prophecy in his time, might explain the rejection of visionary forms. The traditional pentecostal approach of identifying prophecy as a separate charism from revelatory gifts such as the words of knowledge and wisdom (e g Horton 1934) implies that prophecy is effectively removed from the realm of dream and vision and set firmly in the context of the received and spoken *word*. Paul does not appear to deal with any other form of prophecy than the spoken form, probably leaving room for the sharing of dreams and visions under the heading of *revelation*, a separate contribution to the liturgy listed in 1 Cor 14:26. Robeck points out that Irenaeus was not as scrupulous in his terminology, classifying many of the spiritual gifts in the category 'prophetic gifts', including tongues and predictions (Robeck 1985c:112-114).

51. Fee (1987:682) prefers to understand that Paul is here using the term in the Judaic sense of 'what God signifies' i e a pointer to God's attitude. However, this would be an unusual use for Paul. In Rm 4:11 he uses the term in connection with circumcision. However, in every other place he uses it with clear reference to the typical gospel use: in connection with miracles that indicate the powerful presence of God. That 1 Cor 14:22ff is not an exception is evident in the effect ascribed to the sign of prophecy: it drives hearers to acknowledge the powerful presence of God. In 2 Cor 12:12 Paul reminds the Corinthians how his ministry had incorporated signs that had had precisely that effect upon them, a parallel section to 1 Cor 2:4-5 (where the term is not used directly).

52. That tongues are not ecstatic is a position that pentecostals will hold against a number of scholars, e g Beardslee (1994:134) who maintain that this form of ecstatic speech was 'shaped in Corinth by similar phenomena in the pagan world'; Walter & Schelkle (1971:147): 'It is the expression of ecstatic transport or emotion in which, however, it escapes any testing of its genuineness by others'; Engelsen (1970 - throughout this work tongues is considered ecstatic); and Conzelmann (1975:233), who terms tongues an 'ecstatic outburst'. None of these commentaries takes into consideration the fact that, if tongues were ecstatic speech, Paul could scarcely have expected it to be regulated by the speakers themselves. If these scholars are correct, then 1 Corinthians 14 would have to be seen as a discussion of ecstasy (and how believers should limit its occurrence in the worship service) rather than of the charismata themselves.

53. Fee (1987:685) concurs in this understanding of *mania*. Hill (1979:125-126) cites Dunn's opinion that tongues is sign that confirms unbelievers in their unbelief: they write off glossalalics as mad people. However, Fee's notion (an understanding that I have developed for myself and expressed in Clark 1997b) that overemphasis on tongues actually did away with the distinction between pagan practice and Christian seems more consistent with the situation in Corinth. Among the intellectuals of Athens one would expect the dismissive ridicule of Christian *tenets* (Ac 17:32): in Corinth (1 Cor 1:26; 8:1-13) confusion between Christian and pagan *practices* appears a more likely reality.

54. Conzelmann (1975:243) states that the main purpose of prophecy in the church was not 'prediction of the future, but unmasking of man.' Bezuidenhout (1980:336) agrees that propecy is not prediction, but offers immediate guidance and edification. It serves a missionary purpose by confronting the unbeliever (:316-318).

55. Pastor Justus du Plessis, brother of David, still makes much of this openness in the Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue, continually confronting Roman Catholics with the incongruity of calling pentecostals 'brothers' while celebrating the Mass exclusively for Catholics.

56. Robertson & Plummer 1910:318; Carson 1987:116; Fee 1987:686-687 speculates as to whether some prophecies may not have been addressed specifically to unbelievers. Hill (1979:124) agrees with Barrett that the inspired content of prophecy, even if not specifically intended for the unbeliever, nevertheless challenges and confronts such as person.

57. This is Hattingh's concern (1984:225), that charismatic liturgy present concrete examples of God's dealing with sin, brokenness and sickness in an open and obvious way, since this is the very concrete way in which they are encountered daily by the unbeliever. The nature of pentecostal discipleship of Christ as a radical alternative theological and existential form then also extends to its liturgy, where the uninitiated visitor is confronted by something startlingly different to what was normative for them until then, in terms both of phenomena and of values.

58. As for instance in the *Kairos Document* 1985, Chikane 1988b, and König 1982. Hill (1979:193-194), with direct reference to such activists as Huddleston and Martin Luther King concludes: '... this kind of prophetic utterance - whose value and relevance at certain times cannot be impugned - stands in the succession of Old Testament prophetic speech ... rather than in the succession of the New Testament prophets, in so far as we are able to discover their activities and oracles.' (:194) He indicates that the writer of Revelation is an exception to this, particularly in the letters to the seven churches, speaking more in the role of apostle (like Paul and Peter) than in the sense of what we know of the 'community prophets'. Although Stronstad (1997:75-76) deplores the trivialization of pentecostal/charismatic prophecy, he does not directly indicate that it could rather be aimed at socio-political criticism. However, implicit in his argument for a revisioning of the movement as a 'prophethood of believers' is the impact this would have upon its missionary and evangelistic witness, ie. prophetic ministry is not separated from extrovert concerns.

59. Hill (1979:124): 'Paul demonstrates his desire to affirm the missionary function of the word, even of the inspired prophetic word spoken in worship... When the convicted unbeliever demonstrates his sense of unworthiness and confesses his awareness of the immediacy of God's presence ... , the eschatological promises of Scripture ... are fulfilled.' Möller (1975:217) comments: 'Die missionêre aspek van die gawe van profesie behoort egter meer op die voorgrond te wees... '. Crane (1962:33) describes one of the functions of prophecy in the early church as 'evangelistic - to move men to repentance'. McKay (1994:37) remarks that scholars who have become charismatics (particularly in the context of prophecy) feel driven to express themselves far more as *witnesses* than as *analysts*. The source and practice of the gift of prophecy is thus (as indicated by Ac 1:8) aimed at communicating the gospel in witness as much as at personal or communal edification.

60. Smyth (1980:106) maintains that Paul's Christocentric emphases dictated his missionary thrust: 'Total preoccupation with Christ: that, then, is the unchanging centre of Paul's life... His preoccupation with Christ involved and included his preoccupation with people.' He sketches out how Paul's missionary emphasis led to his willingness to 'win friends and influence people' (:110). However, in discussing those texts which show Paul to have been intensely missionary-minded, Smyth does not light upon 1 Cor 14:22-25. O'Brien (1993:xi) notes that interest in the missionary emphasis on Paul among Biblical scholars has only been evident since the 1960's, despite the interest of missiologists for centuries before that. In his work he discusses Paul's missionary enterprise in terms of Paul's own testimony to his call to missions; the distinguishing marks of Paul the missionary; the logic of Paul's gospel; how Paul offers himself as a model of both discipleship and missionary vision; and how his churches were expected to spread the gospel. While discussing a large number of 'missionary' portions from the Pauline *corpus*, O'Brien also misses the missionary emphasis of Paul in 1 Cor 14:22-25.

61. Belleville (1996:121-126) shows that in 1 Corinthians Paul is urging the Corinthians to discipleship based upon imitation of Christ. This is expressed firstly in terms of 'follow me, Paul'. The missionary fervour of Paul the disciple of Christ is held before them as an example (1 Cor 9:19-23) - although free, he made himself a servant to the need of unbelievers to hear the gospel. It is expressed secondly in imitation of Paul as he imitated Christ. Belleville concludes (:126) that Paul's ultimate concern was that they follow the example of Paul and Christ in that both of these laid aside their own rights and prerogatives for the sake of others who needed what they had to offer.

62. Stronstad (1997:76) says of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and prophecy in the late twentieth century church: '... the experience is sought as a private blessing, rather than as an empowering for ministry... prophecy is about new revelations and novel and authoritative interpretations of the Bible, and about who to marry and when to have babies. It is also about material prosperity, and about careers... All over the world there are prophets who, like Balaam, prostitute the gift of prophecy for money and power and who grandstand the gift for prestige.' Poloma (1989:152-154) notes the growth in 'narcissism' in Assemblies of God of North America adherents, a belief that the working of God is aimed at making the individual happy and at providing material comfort. However, she also notes that the denomination maintains a strong evangelistic urge, while largely avoiding overt political partisanship or involvement on socio-political issues (:154-157).

63. Menzies' (1991:278) comments on the role of the Holy Spirit as described by Luke are apposite here: '... Luke consistently portrays the gift of the Spirit as a prophetic endowment which enables its recipient to fulfil a divinely ordained task. From the very outset of his two-volume work, Luke emphasizes the prophetic dimension of the Spirit's activity.' His final remark is: '... I have suggested that one of the reasons Luke wrote was to offer theological and methodological direction for the ongoing Christian mission.' (:279) Both Luke and Paul thus perceive the heart of the church's *raison d'etre* to be extrovert missionary activity, and the gifts of the Spirit to be crucial equipment for the task.

64. Fee (1987:690): '... this list ... seems capable of yielding to an *et cetera* at the end. Each of these items has appeared in the previous discussion; most likely they represent various *types* of verbal manifestations of the Spirit that should occur in their assembly.'

65. Some commentators note that the regulation of the gifts is not a task assigned to any particular leadership group or individual (Fee 1987:691; Witherington 1995:258). Ministry and its regulation in the early church communities appears to have been a product and task of the whole body of believers and not of a special 'clergy'.

66. Witherington (1995:286) supports Fee in this. The verse is translated to read: Let two or three prophets speak, and *then* let the others evaluate... However, the use of two present imperatives linked by the conjunction καὶ does not support this emphasis. (Bruce 1971:134 takes the present tense of the verbs seriously, noting that others are judging *while* the prophesying is taking place. Klauck 1984:104 translates as follows: 'Auch zwei oder drei Propheten sollen zu Wort kommen; die anderen sollen urteilen.' Morris 1983:200 says 'there should be no more than two or three *prophets* speaking at one service' [Morris's italics]. This is the clear grammatical import of the text.) 1 Cor 14:29, following hard on the heels of the list of v 26, most likely introduces a limit that is required in view of the variety of other gifts that also should come into their own in a single service. Horton (1934:188) represents the traditional pentecostal position that only three prophecies may be uttered in a meeting, while a more contemporary charismatic view echoes this independently (Pytches 1993:112). Bezuidenhout (1980:323-324) agrees that the text implies such a restriction.

67. The apparent abuses in Corinth appear to have contradicted a number of Christian norms of the time. McQueen (1995:60-61) points out that selfish individualism of the Corinthians was consistent with an over-realised eschatology, a denial of the correct tension between present and future that an eschatological community should maintain. The community was called to live the life of God's future in their present day, and this demand had express ethical implications (:62-63). Hunt (1996:138) maintains that the abuses were inconsistent with the nature of the Corinthian church as an 'inspired' body, since such self-assertion denied the inherent equality of inspiration where everyone is inspired. The most obvious Pauline conclusion is that the practices at Corinth were inconsistent with the nature of Christian love.

68. The rapid growth of the Faith Movement in Southern Africa at the end of the '70's forced many previously open pentecostal churches to revise their practice with regard to evaluating prophecy. Many groups would prohibit visitors to their fellowship from sharing prophetic utterances. Others appointed panels of elders to whom the content of a prophecy would have to be submitted before the person might speak it publicly. There was often great confusion where such steps were not taken, with wandering charismatics uttering the most radical and abusive 'prophecies' in fellowships not their own.

69. Horton (1934:205) states that the intent of v 30 is that prophesying in the church was subject to immediate challenge: 'It also means no doubt that if a prophet is prophesying, and another "judging" learns by the Spirit that the prophecy is not according to Scripture, the one prophesying must cease speaking at the moment he is challenged!'

70. Robeck (1987:7_:) discusses the suggestions made by others (Harnack, Hill, Aune, von Campenhausen) with regard to e decline of New Testament prophecy. His own interest is the relationship between ongoing revelation and the development of the notion of a Christian canon. He concludes that the testing of prophecy became a crucial matter for the early church, but that prophetic excess alone did not lead to the development of the *regulae fidei*, and that the two elements of canonical norms and ongoing revelation interacted with and complemented one another.

71. Beardslee (1994:137-140) also discusses the problem of harmonising 1 Cor 11 and 1 Cor 14 on this issue, and after considering various theories concludes that the prohibition of 1 Cor 14:34-35 is such a clear contradiction of the implications of1 Cor 11:5 that it must be a later addition to the text. Conzelmann (1975:246) used similar logic to substantiate his belief that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is an interpolation. The only text-critical evidence for such a position *might* be argued from the fact that a very few manuscripts have been encountered in which vv 34-35 are included after v 40. However,the only Greek text among them that is earlier than the 5th century is Ambrosiaster, who quotes the verses in this order. The others are related Greek manuscripts of the 4th to 9th centuries, and one Old Latin manuscript. It is difficult on such sketchy evidence to a) assume that the verses were originally included after v 40, or b) assume that the verses are therefore an interpolation. It is probably better method to conclude that Paul is dealing in 1 Cor 11:5 and 1 Cor 14:32-35 with two different matters relating to women in worship.

72. I have developed this theme in detail elsewhere (Clark 1995a).

73. Spittler (1985) appears to attribute later pentecostal caution with regard to women's ministry to the *rapprochement* between pentecostals and evangelicals after the 2nd World War. Thomas (1994) maintains that a distinctively pentecostal approach (based on a method he discerns in the debate of Acts 15) to the apparently ambivalent texts on this issue might resolve the matter in favour of more widespread pentecostal acceptance of women's ministry.

74. During recent trips to Mozambique, where I conducted seminars for church leaders in the central region of that recently war-torn land, I encountered a situation which might offer a parallel to Paul's problem in 1 Corinthians 14. The men and women (pastors and elders and their wives) sat in two separate blocks, with the women left to attend to the children. The educational level of the men was marginally higher than that of the women, and the chauvinism common to African tribal society was also obvious. While the men listened attentively, the women were often distracted by conversations among themselves, or by their children. At times they would loudly enquire of whatever men were closest what exactly was happening. In just such a setting (and I believe history could show that things were not much different in Corinth) could I imagine the apostle commanding the women to keep silent in the service, since they are not permitted to converse. He maintained that it is disgraceful for women to converse in church; if they do want clarity on something, they should ask their own husbands at home. This is one of the theories Carson dismisses (1980:122ff), but he does not appear to offer a more reasonable alternative.

75. This does not mean Paul is careless of the rights of people, including women. He appears to extend to a woman in the situation of marriage to an unbeliever the right of separation without guilt or further restraint, if her partner leaves her - 1 Cor 7:15. However, as in the discussion concerning the rights of Christians with regard to eating whatever they like, he makes all such rights subservient to the requirements of clear Christian witness and of mutual love.

76. The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa has been through at least two major upheavals in this century, both based on the assertion by certain groups that the liturgy of the church was 'dead'. The Latter Rain movement broke away in 1928, but soon marginalised themselves in pentecostal society, and in public assessment, by adopting selfish and chaotic forms of charismatic expression. The Pentecostal Protestant Church did the same in 1958, but has since moderated its extreme position, and regular and extensive contact now occurs between their leaders and those of the AFM of SA.

77. Van der Spuy (1985) has traced the tensions between 'quiet' (*nuwe order*) and 'extrovert' (*ou order*) liturgical tendencies in the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA. However, a relevant topic for further study in practical theology would be a correlation between the prevalence of either tendency and church growth patterns. Quebedeaux (1976:150-152) argued in the 1970's that neo-pentecostal charismatics tended to operate more 'quietly' than did classical pentecostals. The term 'charismatic' has since the 1980's in South Africa come to be associated primarily with the Faith Movement, which means that that sort of characterisation certainly no longer holds true in this country.

78. Interesting is Walter & Schelkle's comment that tongues, because it is an expression of ecstatic transport and emotion, 'escapes any testing of its genuineness by others' (1971:147) Although the issue in this research is not tongues but prophecy, it should be noted that precisely the test pentecostals might employ to determine whether an outburst in tongues is genuine, would be to determine whether it were ecstatic (and therefore likely to be of pagan or occult origin) or not.

79. Giesriegl (1989:155) summarises the criteria for testing prophecy as: confessing Jesus as Lord, and edification of the church in the light of love. Some South African contributions can also be noted here. Beznidenhout (1980) has provided one of the earliest scholarly pentecostal exegetical studies of 1 Cor 12-14. Beznidenhout 1997 is a summary of some of the conclusions reached in that thesis. He maintains that the Pauline criteria for the practice of the charismata are essentially trinitarian in nature and origin, and shows how this is the case for each criterion: confessional, common benefit, service, love, and edification. With regard to the confessional criterion: It is the *Holy Spirit*, who is the Spirit of *God*, who gives the confession '*Jesus* is Lord'. With regard to the criterion of common benefit: It is *God* and the *Lord* who distribute the gifts of the *Spirit*. The criterion of service: it is *God* who brought the united body of *Christ* together by the *Spirit*, and gave charismata for mutual edification. The criterion of love: love is the love of *God*, of *Christ*, and of the *Spirit* (here Beznidenhout is forced to appeal to a wider Pauline basis than 1 Cor 12-14). The criterion of edification: Because *God* is not a god of confusion, the *Lord* has laid down rules for the working of the *Spirit*'s gifts. Many others have outlined criteria for evaluating prophecy. Möller (1975:214-215) states that the major tools and criteria for evaluation are: Scripture, discerning of Spirits, the character of the prophesier, the content of the prophesy and its relationship to obedience to the Lord, and the source of prophesy (the divine Spirit or the human flesh). Nel (1997:172-173) appropriates Beznidenhout's criteria, with respect to his own discussion about testing the leading of the Holy Spirit. Fourie (1990:35-40) discusses the contribution of a number of scholars (Yocum, Anne, Grudem, etc) and also lists various criteria such as love, orderliness, confessional orthodoxy, service, usefulness, and appropriateness. He agrees with Grudem that the process of evaluation took place at a personal level, each individual deciding in their own heart if (all or part of) the prophecy and its content was valid (:36).

80. Cartledge (1994:116) notes that the confessional (and therefore Scriptural) criterion is the most common implemented by charismatics. This is taken to mean that it contradicts no part of Scripture. He notes that prophecy does not often relate directly to doctrinal statements, referring particularly to guidance and direction. If this is so, then comparison with Scriptural norms would take into account not only the didactic portions of Scripture, but also the narrative. In a prophetic community, narrative would thus serve an intensely didactic function, offering norms by which guidance and direction can be evalnated. If the evaluation of Luke's theology by Stronstad (1984 & 1997) and Menzies (1991) as *charismatic* theology which is aimed at instructing a *prophetic* community is allowed, then the didactic function of Lukan narrative is evident.

81. 'Simple' in this context means that the guidelines *have* been articulated and *can* be applied. Pytches and Penney contend that although the criteria are articulated clearly enough, the process of evaluating is not always so simple. Pytches (1993:97-100) lists 8 criteria: Scripture, Jesus, the gospel, the character of the prophet, fulfilment, edification, 'resonance' and love. He maintains that none of these criteria is

without problems for the evaluator, since even in Scripture some prophetic utterances offer ambivalent information (e g even demons can attest to the Lordship of Jesus - Mk 1:24). Penney (1997:80) states: 'Prophecy in both Testaments, as well as in the early church, was a complex phenomenon which demanded critical evaluation by the community of God's people using a range of criteria which were not always decisive. The most fundamental of these was conformity with the received traditions, correctly applied to the particular circumstances, which in turn required difficult hermeneutical judgements.' Mckay (1994:29) refers to the *problem* of discerning how much of the prophecy is of God and how much human in origin, and notes that the problem is not peculiar to New Testament prophecy, but was recognised in the Old Testament as well.

82. As noted earlier, the UBS Greek text indicates that the editors believe this portion of verse 33 belongs with the teaching on women, probably by analogy with 1 Cor 11:16.

83. Penney suggests that the failure to distinguish between the nature of Old Testament prophecy and that of its New Testament counterpart underlies some of the problems encountered in the pentecostal movement today. His major thesis is aimed against those theologians whose contention is 'that New Testament prophecy is uniformly authoritative, foundational, and so has ceased' (1997:82 - these are obviously primarily evangelical dispensationalists). However, he points out that pentecostals who accept the identification with Old Testament prophetic authority (and who do not claim it has ceased) are revealing an attitude in their ministry identical to that condemned by Hermas and Irenaeus: 'They fought against prophecy which was characterized by: - triumphalism which uncritically applied promises from the biblical traditions to excite the unstable masses with what they wanted to hear; - the proud aspirations and spiritual self-recommendation of prophets who placed themselves above critical judgement; - a popular following of those who were weak and insecure in their faith, looking for easy solutions and solace to answer difficult problems and avoid repentance; - the extravagant lifestyle and sometimes immorality of the prophet, financed by his personal popularity in the circles of the wealthy and the powerful; - a claimed ability to prophesy on request and in private and to impart prophetic inspiration to others, with apparent disregard to the sovereignty of God.' (:82)

84. Gillespie (1994:163) maintains that the grammar argues that evaluating should be done by those who are similarly gifted, i e by other prophets (this appears to be Morris's position - 1983:200). However, he recognises (in discussion with Fee's arguments concerning the 'all' who can prophesy) that not only prophets prophesied, so the gifting could extend beyond those who occupied the prophetic office. Witherington (1995:186, note 40), noting that Dunn claims that Paul intends the other prophets, states this is 'possible but uncertain'. Cartledge (1994:114-115) reports on the debate, but does not opt for a particular position for himself. He merely notes that 'the majority are united in the position that *some* discernment and evaluation are necessary.' (:115) Engelsen (1970:170) maintains that the term refers to 'other prophets'.

85. Möller (1975:214-215) cites Donald Gee in this regard: the prophesy can be evaluated by the gift of discerning of spirits, or by means of the witness every 'Spirit-filled' believer has in their own heart. Hill (1979:133-134) maintains that discerning of spirits was given primarily for testing revelatory charisms. Penney (1997:60-61) suggests that the gift of discerning of spirits might have been applicable to evaluation of prophecy, but notes that others (e g Barrett) have seen that gift rather to have been the ability to discern between the activity of demonic spirits as opposed to the divine. This is probably the most widely accepted pentecostal position (cf Horton 1934:75-76; Möller 1975:257-258 summarises some traditional pentecostal views, most of which retain this fairly narrow focus).

86. What the spirit of *python* was saying through the slave girl in Philippi (Ac 16:17) was perfectly acceptable Christian theology, but was discerned by Paul to be the product of demonic inspiration rather than of divine.

87. Penney (1997:74ff) discusses the criterion given in the post-apostolic period for the evaluation of prophecy. *Hermas* identifies false prophets and prophecies with divination that follows a pagan pattern. Such false prophecy produces a lifestyle that can be perceived and condemned. *Hermas* does not offer criterion of doctrine nor of outcome of prediction, but rather of 'the work of the Spirit in the gathered congregation' (:74-75). Irenaeus offered the criterion of an upright Christian character (:77). Penney cites Robeck's (1987:73-74) summary of the criteria used to test prophecy into the third century as: self-

control of the prophet, fulfilment, personal character of the prophet and prophetic purpose, methodology and fruit, with the dominant test being content (Penney 1997:78).

88. Möller (1975:214) mentions the character of the prophet as one criterion of evaluation of prophecy. Crane (1962:210ff) describes it as the second of two crucial criteria, the primary one being confessional consistency. Cartledge (1994:117-118) offers a survey of some charismatic attitudes toward this criterion, noting that some would like to see it as primary. Pytches (1993:98-99) offers the character of the prophet as a criterion, while noting that it is not (even in the Scriptural narrative) an absolute test (Abraham, Balaam and David all uttered prophetic words, yet none lived blameless lives). Pytches touches on an issue relevant to 1 Corinthians: Paul is evidently dealing with a community in which role-models for Christian conduct were lacking in both quantity and quality - however, he does not appear to accept those ethical shortcomings as primary disqualifications from prophesying. In fact, it is difficult to find a text within this epistle that does directly link character and prophesying, apart from the command to love (1 Cor 13:2). Under the heading *Forbidden fruit for prophets* Pytches (1993:279-292) does indicate clearly that an area that *should* be considered out of bounds to charismatic individuals is the area of the occult.

89. It would appear that Anne is speaking of first-person oracles which are self-referential, viz God speaking *about* God. However, prophets who speak as though God himself were directly speaking are well-attested in both Testaments.

90. Which appear to be Penney's (1997:82-84) target, as they were of the *Didache* and *Hermas* (and of Paul - 2 Cor 11-12).

91. This is the thrust of Stronstad's (1997:75-77) objection to the trivialization and commercialisation of charismatic prophecy at the end of this century.

92. Fourie has approached the subject from the point of departure of New Testament science, while Möller has discussed prophecy as just one of the charismata with which he is concerned, in a systematic theological survey of pentecostal teaching and practice.

93. Bezuidenhout was an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church who experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the pentecostal sense in the early 1970's. He also took the step of believers' baptism by immersion, which effectively terminated his relationship with his church. He became a lecturer in New Testament at the AFM Theological College in 1976, retiring for health reasons in 1987. At the time that he pursued his doctoral research at the University of Pretoria (the theological faculty that trains DRC ministers) it was still fairly unusual for South African pentecostals to do research at that level. Such early pentecostal works therefore often do not explicitly describe a pentecostal paradigm as presupposition. However, Bezuidenhout's (1980:261-338) treatment of glossolalia and prophecy indicate that he is working on the understanding that these phenomena are a legitimate part of contemporary worship.

94. Horton (1934:23-45; 86-103; 191-207) has given one the earliest commentaries on 1 Cor 12-14. However, he has done so as a pentecostal teacher expounding on the nature and practice of the charismata, rather than as scholarly New Testament research.

95. 'It is of some interest that people who believe so strongly in the Bible as the Word of God should at the same time spend so much energy getting around the plain sense of vv. 39-40. Surely there is irony in that. What Paul writes in these chapters he claims to be the command of the Lord; one wonders how he might have applied v. 38 to those who completely reject his command.' (Fee 1987:713)

96. Fee (1976:118ff) argues for the use of evangelical hermeneutics, and on that basis critiques the pentecostal use of narrative to substantiate the doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence; Cargal (1993:163) identifies Fee as a prime example of pentecostals using evangelical methodology.

97. 'Pentecostal' even though he does not plead for a specifically pentecostal hermeneutic. Fee shows that the application of evangelical methodology on the basis of pentecostal presnppositions and distinctives *can* provide an interpretation of the New Testament that differs at crucial points from conservative evangelical tenets. The question raised by this study is whether he can always be consistent with the pentecostal world-view and ethos when he uses a method that owes nothing to these distinctives.

98. This is not to imply a tension in the Pauline writings between theory and practice. However, a pentecostal interpretation of Paul would probably note that Paul primarily offers theory as a basis for correct conduct and practice, rather than describing correct conduct and practice in an attempt to elucidate correct conceptuality.

99. I am not aware of any exegetical work on 1 Cor 14 done by proponents of the liberation/political theologies. However, there are clear indications in that school of thinking concerning 'prophetic ministry', that it is aimed primarily at socio-political critique. I have discussed Moltmann's participation in this in Clark 1989:158-160; 168-170; 185-189, and contrasted it with the pentecostal notion of personal charismatic endowment that operates immediately and at the instigation/initiation of God and not of the individual.

100. In this sense Chikane (1988b) uses it of himself and his campaign against *apartheid*.

101. As mentioned in the excursus, narrative texts do acquire an implicit didactic function in pentecostalism. However, the identification here is of texts that are universally recognised as part of the epistolary genre, ie. explicitly instructional (didactic and catechetic) material.

102. Hughes (1978:403) summarises the relationship between Paul and the Old Testament as follows: 'The use of Old Testament quotations in 1 and 2 Corinthians enunciates the central continuity between the Old Testament and Corinth to be the character of God as particularly manifest in his work through the Messiah... The quotations manifest both a historical and a pneumatic conceptuality... The newness of Paul's application provides a certain discontinuity with the accepted interpretive conclusions of his Jewish contemporaries, but finds solid continuity with the historical sense of the Old Testament.' It might be stated, as a paraphrase of Hughes' findings, that pentecostal use of the New Testament enunicates that the central continuity between the New Testament and pentecostalism is the character of God as revealed in Christ the Saviour, Healer, Baptiser and Coming King... that the pentecostal application provides a certain discontinuity with the accepted interpretive conclusions of contemporaries, but finds solid continuity with the historical sense of the New Testament.

103. Hughes (1978:420) shows that Paul's quotation from Is 28:11-12 in 1 Cor 14:21 is derived from a Palestinian Greek version of the Old Testament that differs from the LXX. His λέγει κύριος sayings also seem to indicate a pre-Pauline early Christian (AD 30) form reflecting a text that at times agrees with the LXX, at others does not. This appears to indicate that Paul's textual background was Palestinian (both of Jewish Scripture and of Christian tradition), and therefore does not reflect Greek or Diaspora influences as much as influences originating from close to the historical person and events of Jesus of Nazareth.

104. Hurd (1983) describes the sequence of correspondence as follows: While Paul was in Corinth he was a young and enthusiastic missionary. He gladly accepted his converts' testimonies of conversion, and enforced no strict disciplines upon them. However, as he matured and saw the excesses that could arise from a notion of anomian freedom, particularly after his visit to Jerusalem for the Apostolic Council, he wrote to the Corinthians concerning a number of matters, including the need to abstain from immorality. Hurd maintains that this original letter from Paul was an attempt to enforce the Apostolic Decree upon the Corinthians. They responded indignantly, enquiring of Paul why he had not taught them these things while present with them, and now was attempting to enforce them by means of a letter. Their attitude generally was: What is wrong with incest? Why shouldn't we eat meat offered to idols? Why can't women prophesy without head-covering? You never objected when you were here before? Why now? He argues that 1 Corinthians is Paul's reply to this hostile questioning, and that Paul's literary strategies need to be understood against the background of that letter, as well as the background of oral information that he had received about Corinth. Hurd's reconstruction is imaginative and plausible, but in the absence of textual evidence of this earlier correspondence remains speculative. As a commentary on the social pre-text of 1 Corinthians, Chow (1992) postulates that the patron-client system that permeated contemporary society was operating in the church as well. Paul was confronted by powerful patrons in the church, whose desire to continue to conform to the power structure of the Graeco-Roman world brought them into opposition with the notion of the church as body of Christ. They were influential enough to persuade many Corinthian believers to side with them, since it is clear that most believers were of the client class of society. Paul's conflict was therefore with patrons who chose a syncretistic form of

Christianity so as not to be excluded from pagan influence structures, and other Christians who relied on their Christian patrons, so as to make their way in Corinthian society, both in and outside of the church. Against this acceptance of pagan power-structures Paul postulates an alternative model, the body-member metaphor, in which love and mutual concern replaces the selfish ambitions at work in the patron-client system.

105. As noted above (note 102) with respect to Corinthians, Hughes (1978:403) shows that Paul himself wrote in a clear sense of historical continuity with the Old Testament text and thought-world. Therefore an understanding of the text of Romans can credibly be achieved in terms of a wider understanding of the whole text of Scripture, Old Testament and New, nevertheless noting the distinctive use of certain terms by Paul, e g 'flesh' may not mean for Paul what it does to John.

106. There appears to be a large consensus among commentators that Romans 1 - 8 forms a logical unit in this epistle, with Romans 8 being the concluding portion of Paul's thesis on personal salvation. Rm 8:31-39 is the ultimate conclusion, in terms of form, style and content. The description of the content varies slightly among commentators: Du Toit (1996:50-51) argues that chps 5 - 8 of Romans describe the gifts of new life in right relationship with God. Stuhlmacher (1994:14-15) argues that Romans 8 is the culmination of Paul's treatise on 'the righteousness of God for Jews and Gentiles.' Carson, Moo & Morris (1992:239) see this chapter as the culmination of Paul's thesis that the gospel is God's power to salvation.

107. These divisions of Romans 8 are those set out in the UBS Greek text. Most commentators accept them (e g Bruce 1963:68 uses exactly the same wording for the headings), with minor discrepancies (e g Cranfield 1975:370-444 puts v 17 in the second division, not the first.)

108. There is general agreement that this chapter is a chapter of the Holy Spirit. Bruce (1963:156-157) states that the Holy Spirit pervades the chapter. Stott (1994:39) says it is 'full of the Spirit'. Achtemeier's (1985:25) analysis of the chapter is representative of many others: The Spirit and the flesh (8:1-17); the Spirit and the future (8:18-30); the Spirit and Christian assurance (8:31-39).

109. Käsemann (1980:212ff) is one commentator who takes note of this. He argues that Paul shares the hellenistic view of the Spirit as '... a power which works in all the baptized and which also empowers for ecstasy and miracle' (:212) However, he argues that Paul is often working against ecstatics and thaumaturgists in his arguments. Käsemann's attribution of hellenistic rather than Old Testament thinking to Paul, his notion that the Spirit is received at baptism, and that spiritual gifts are ecstatic, also differs from pentecostal thinking. Stott (1994:230ff) takes issue with Käsemann's translation of v 14 (those who are *driven* by the Spirit), representing the view that the leading of the Holy Spirit should be understood primarily inwardly and ethically.

110. Du Toit (1996:40) concludes that the epistle does not present formal teaching on the Lord's Supper or ecclesiology, and does not have a well-developed Christology or eschatology.

111. Many pentecostals find in vv 26-27 reference to praying in the Spirit (in tongues), since Paul refers to the Spirit as pleading/interceding with groans and sighs that cannot be expressed in words. However, a distinction should probably be made between what cannot be expressed in words (non-verbal), and prayer in the Spirit which is expressed in words which are unintelligible to speaker and hearer alike (e g Stott below). Commentators make a number of suggestions in this regard, with some considering the groans to possibly be tongues (Johnson 1997:130; Käsemann 1980:240-241). Stott (1994:243) rejects this outright, while Stuhlmacher (1994:133) considers it to be the incomprehensible language of angels and spirits.

112. Käsemann (1980:249) notes that Christian suffering was directly related to Christian witness. 'It does not concern the person who is exposed to the incalculable whims of chance, but the follower of Jesus who is stigmatized by the cross.' Stuhlmacher (1994:140) notes that these troubles accrue to those Christians who are persecuted for missionary witness in their own localities as well as on foreign fields. Neither commentator draws conclusions from this for the status of Christians today. Achtemeier (1985:150ff) understands these troubles in terms of 'misfortune', while Johnson (1997:131ff) sees this portion to be discussing 'providence'.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The descriptive task

The pentecostal movement as a phenomenon maintains a distinctive ethos that implies a self-understanding and a theological paradigm which are equally distinctive. If this is acknowledged then the *descriptive* aspect of doing pentecostal theology will be its initial task. Theological method associated with the pentecostal phenomenon will need to be consistent with what the movement is and understands itself to be. It will take note of the distinctive history of the movement, both in terms of its antecedents and of its development during the last nine decades. It will also need to be relevant to the dynamic of the movement, ensuring that it does not apply artificial constraint upon the impetus which pentecostals understand to be the working of God's Spirit among them.

In this study pentecostalism is seen to have the roots of its ethos in the history and values of groups who were often on the 'underside' or alternative side of church history. These include the Holiness movement, Wesleyan pietism with its strong influence from the Moravian church, the Anabaptists, Tertullian's Montanism, and the first century church community itself. This is an alternative historical and theological underpinning to that of the established European denominations (most of whom have accepted a post-Constantinian paradigm for being 'church') as well as to that of many of the North American evangelical groups. The essence of the pentecostal ethos lies in its self-understanding as a *radical, alternative, Jesus-centred, witnessing community and movement*. It is also essentially an apocalyptic or eschatological community, displaying a strong primitivistic tendency as well as a marked futuristic emphasis. This means that it reveals both conservative and radical tendencies. It also understands itself as a charismatic community existing in pneumatic continuity with the earliest Christian community as described in the Lukan account in Acts. The nature of this self-understanding means that, although much pentecostal theologising is being done today in the milieu of

established pentecostal denominations, pentecostal scholars need to be aware of the *fundamentally* different ethos of their own pentecostal roots. It means that the values and methods associated with many historical European theologies and philosophies, cast as they so often have been in the context of (among other interests) established church-state relations and post-Enlightenment rationalist categories (in historical studies in particular), are not always amenable to or consistent with pentecostal concerns. It may even imply that pentecostal scholarship, to be consistent with its origins, consciously distance itself from much of the findings and concerns of that world.

In the context of the development of a viable and consistent pentecostal approach to the Bible, this means that pentecostal scholarship needs to be open to the role played by the Bible in its own historical antecedents and popular history. Essential to this is the role of the Bible in providing the guiding parameters of the Way in which the dynamic of the Holy Spirit is leading them. This makes it difficult to reduce Scripture to primarily a source-book of confession or doctrine. It also emphasises the importance of historical awareness in biblical studies, as those who walk this way have a common history which they share with one another, with earlier generations who have walked it, and with the God whom they understand to be leading them along the way. The interpretation and use of the Bible in such a *discipleship* movement is radically different to that of an established protestant denomination. And the fact that this discipleship movement is also intensely *missionary* in its concerns lends a dimension to its application of Scripture which is often lacking in a more settled church environment. In a certain sense the Scriptures become a tool to be used in missionary and discipling work, although the dangers of pragmatism, and of utilising the Scriptures for narrow personal or parochial ends, need to be recognised in this process.

Interest in a pentecostal hermeneutic will draw attention to the socio-cultural development of the pentecostal movement during the twentieth century. While a more settled and less dynamic First-world pentecostalism may be challenged by the energy of the popular pentecostal movement of the Second and Third worlds, it can nevertheless offer guidance to the emerging scholarship from these regions. At the same time First-world pentecostal scholars have inherited from their Western paradigm the historical insight to sound the alarm for their own

complacent communities, which appear in many instances to be about to lose the distinctively pentecostal sense of fellowship and mission. The danger is that pentecostal scholarship may merely affirm or sanction such a development and provide one more example in recent church history of incompatibility between theological reflection and a dynamic movement of the Spirit of God. That is why this research could not be stop at merely spelling out the descriptive task of identifying a pentecostal hermeneutic: that essential first stage urges the scholar to the next and crucial step - tentatively termed the *prescriptive* task.

At an interim stage it is necessary to formulate a notion of pentecostal use of the Scriptures which can be comprehended in relationship to contemporary literary theory. Pentecostal hermeneutics as literary theory could be understood in terms of the following parameters:

1. It understands the text of the New Testament as *functional* and *utilitarian* (a handbook or manual of living), bearing witness by means of *direct* reference to a space-time historical process in which God has related to his people. The *literary* nature of the text is not so emphasised as to make it indirectly or non-historically referential to historical reality.

2. It understands the *relationship between the text and the author* to be direct, cogent and intelligible, and that the sensible hermeneutical approach is to seek the literal intent of the author in his own milieu and seek to appropriate and implement that intent in the present-day situation. The difference in social and cultural conditions, and in the world-views, of the originating and interpreting communities is not understood to form an insuperable obstacle to this aim.

3. The input of *the reader* is recognised, in terms of personal orientation and communal setting, but not absolutised. This means that the inherent unavoidable subjectivity associated with any reading process is not seen as an excuse for reading multiple (perhaps contradictory) meanings into the text. However, in terms of the notion of experiential commonality between the first century community and the present day's pentecostal / charismatic interpreters, it is understood that there *is* a reading situation

which is more likely to lead to a valid understanding of writings originating in a charismatic community, viz another charismatic community. The role of cognition and of 'affections' in the reading process is currently an important element of the debate among pentecostals themselves.

4. The text of the New Testament is understood to address *total reality*, in a direct way. This includes physical, social, psychological, cultural and historical aspects of all human existence, as well as the spirit realm itself.

5. The *language* of the New Testament text is seen as clearly referential to constants, and is thus translatable and understandable. The New Testament is not reduced to a set of literary symbols having reference purely to its own world, but addresses in straightforward and intelligible terms a spiritual situation which is common to and readily understood by all human beings. It confronts and challenges them with theses that they must of necessity accept or reject.

6. The text of the New Testament is approached and implemented with a specific *aim and purpose*, to provoke similar experiences of God among present-day humanity. The aim is not merely to reach an understanding of the text (i e to enter its world), but to experience similar phenomena and relationships to those to which the text witnesses. This is understood as application, implementation and demonstration.

It is on the basis of this understanding of the nature of the New Testament that the prescriptive task is approached.

7.2 The prescriptive task

The pentecostal movement has always taken the Bible seriously, as well as the working of God within history. The prescriptive task of the search for a pentecostal hermeneutic is thus derived from the descriptive, both in establishing what is not viable for such a hermeneutic (a

cautionary aspect) and in *affirming* what elements are consistent with it.

7.2.1 The cautionary aspects of the prescriptive task

The descriptive task cautions pentecostal scholarship to scrutinise all systems related to theology, including the hermeneutical, which offer themselves to pentecostalism as valid expressions compatible with the movement's essence and ethos, and as a panacea for its intellectual needs. In terms of hermeneutics this means that hermeneutical systems which arise in a radically different milieu to pentecostalism, and/or which do not share the same values and intentions as the pentecostal movement, need to be subjected to intense scrutiny before being proposed as adequate for the needs and intentions of that movement. In this research the attraction of four of these systems has been examined, viz the conservative evangelical; the socio-political contextual theology's political hermeneutic and its derivative, the action-reflection method; the use of the Bible in the Faith Movement derived from Kenyon; and post-modern literary theory. The differences in the historical antecedents of each of these, and in the intentions of each system, to pentecostal roots and mission, was highlighted. For these reasons any attraction they hold for pentecostal scholarship needs to be carefully scrutinised. The following points were made with respect to each system:

1. The hermeneutics of the *conservative evangelical* movement are attractive to North American pentecostals in particular. There are historical reasons for this, particularly the overwhelming numbers of evangelicals on that continent, in comparison to pentecostals. There is not always the same attraction in other parts of the world, although the permeation of the world-wide Christian media by evangelical products means that that point of view is well known and understood outside of North America.

   Although it would be a generalisation to maintain that all conservative evangelicals are fundamentalist and/or dispensationalist, it is clear that the intents and values of fundamentalism and dispensationalism nevertheless do permeate much of evangelicalism. These find expression in affirmation among many evangelicals of the

verbal inspiration of Scripture, in the issue of inerrancy, and in concern that the tenets of the great Protestant confessions be affirmed. Dispensationalism is affirmed not only in the basic pre-millennialism of popular North American evangelicalism, but also in the rationalisation of the absence of the overtly charismatic spiritual gifts (such as tongues) in the evangelical community today. The tension between evangelicalism and pentecostalism comes to a head on the issues of (apparently) using biblical narrative to formulate doctrine, and the role of ongoing revelation in the church today.

This study has shown that, in line with Anabaptism and the Methodist/Holiness movements, the primary issue for pentecostals has not been affirmation of canon or creed, but of implementation of the Scriptures in lifestyle and testimony. While these concerns are also evident in evangelicalism to a great extent, they do not dominate the search for self-understanding as they do pentecostalism. The historical concerns of pentecostal biblical interpretation are thus in many ways different to those of the evangelical movement, stressing as they do continuity and the implementation and demonstration of historical constants. Where evangelicalism implies an impetus toward conservatism, pentecostalism (while sometimes affirming the conservative position) also emphasises the onward and continuous (and often radical) working of God by his Spirit.

2. The use of the hermeneutics of the *socio-political contextual theologies* has been especially attractive to pentecostals in the Third world, in particular those on a dynamic interface between the First and Third worlds. Such an interface occurs in South Africa, and the use of the Bible by pentecostal leader Frank Chikane was used in this study to highlight the tensions that could be created by using such an approach in a classical pentecostal movement. The political and liberation theologies do share areas of commonality with the pentecostal movement, particularly in being critical of the churches' alliances. They also offer a radical alternative perspective on at least one aspect of reality, viz. the socio-political. However, in terms of use and application of Scripture they appear in places to be inimical to consistent pentecostal theologising.

The so-called political hermeneutic and the action-reflection method were seen to imply

a primarily inductive approach to the Scriptures. The Bible is thus understood primarily as a tool, approached, examined and utilised in a larger quest, viz the search for a more 'just' socio-economic order. In the context of this quest, biblical hermeneutics is dominated by (usually) marxist political and economic theory, as is made evident in particularly the demand that a 'social analysis' be made before the Bible be interpreted in a given historical situation. This analysis normally proceeds from a single (and therefore exclusive) ideological perspective.

This approach to the Scriptures has been utilised primarily in the context of systematic theology. A biblical theological approach has rarely utilised its presuppositions; in fact, some of the strongest criticisms of its tenets originate from biblical theologians. Since the primary understanding of Scripture in the pentecostal movement has been in line with biblical rather than systematic theological (dogmatic) methodology, its importation into pentecostalism has at times created severe tensions on the ground. The Bible is used in a mainly deductive way by the movement, with biblicism being a far greater danger than relativism. The main pentecostal criticism of the socio-political hermeneutic is that it assigns a secondary (inductive) role to Scripture, while at the same time it appears that uncritical primacy is given to a single ideological approach. However, pentecostalism can also be cautioned by the ideological particularism and simplisticism of the political theologies, and not reduce its own understanding of Christianity to an affirmation of conservative ideologies.

The inherent relativism of the political hermeneutic was also noted. A link may well exist, in terms of values and intent, between this hermeneutic and the (similarly relativising) post-modern approach to the Scriptures.

3. The pentecostal movement has been challenged by the *Faith movement of E W Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland*, particularly in terms of dynamical growth and extrovert worship. Pentecostal pragmatism has often led to the tenets of this movement being adopted, including the peculiar way in which it uses the Scriptures. This includes a basic fundamentalism and extreme form of biblicism, but is dominated in particular

by the notion of 'revelational knowledge' and by a strong theological presupposition of radically-realised eschatology. Its influence is most insidious because it offers itself as a plain, straightforward application of the Bible without rational and theological subtleties. It promotes a gnostic form of dualism, in which rationally acquired knowledge (including knowledge of the Bible and theology) is set against 'spiritual' (revelational) knowledge.

The dangers of such a hermeneutic to the pentecostal movement can be summed up as:

i) It encourages the growth of personality cults (based on the great personalities who receive 'revelational knowledge');

ii) It breeds an atmosphere of chauvinistic anti-intellectualism;

iii) It limits the scope of the impact of the Scriptures in any given situation;

iv) It exalts the teaching of one man (Kenyon) to the level of canon;

v) It offers the vain hope of a simplistic interpretation of Scripture, thereby appealing to grass-roots pentecostals, yet it delivers only a highly nuanced message which it insists may not be questioned or tested rationally.

The simplistic and anti-intellectual use of the Bible in this movement is challenging an entire generation of pentecostal leaders and teachers to inspire pentecostal pastors and believers to once again dedicate themselves to disciplined and reasoned study of the Scriptures.

4. The most recent challenge to pentecostal scholarship has come from those who would promote the use of what they term *'post-modern' literary theory* in the interpretation of Scripture. The influence of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical theory is a predominant issue here. Those who propose this course appear to wish to counter most particularly the influence of evangelicalism on pentecostal hermeneutical theorising. In urging this method upon the pentecostal movement they make the following points:

i) The evangelicalism of pentecostal scholarship leaves their interpretation of the Bible at the level of *explanation*, not of *understanding*;

ii) Post-modern interpretation of the Bible is essential if pentecostals wish to be relevant to a post-modern age;

iii) It would provide a means of still using those narrative portions of Scripture shown by historical criticism to be 'not historically true';

iv) It would provide the philosophical space in which the notion of an encounter with God could be meaningfully spoken of;

v) This paradigm makes it possible for pentecostals of differing cultures, genders and class to find differing yet relevant meanings in the same Scriptures;

vi) Post-modern theory lays more emphasis upon the function of a narrative than upon its historicity;

vii) In the post-modern paradigm, the identification of the semiotic systems involved in the origin and in the interpretation of the text is more important than the text's historical origin and transmission.

Opponents of this proposal include the following points in their arguments for rejecting it:

i) Any interpretation of the text which looses it from its historical origin and intent would lead to an unacceptable multiplicity of meanings, with the all the subjectivity this entails;

ii) Pentecostals cannot be deluded into believing that it is immaterial whether the narratives of Scripture are historically true or not: for instance, it matters to pentecostalism whether Christ really rose from the dead, according the biblical narrative;

iii) Post-modern literary theory would lead to pentecostals reading

meanings *into* the text rather than obtaining meaning *from* the text. The sterility associated with the historical critical method will have to be obviated in some less drastic way;

iv) Some (e g Menzies) maintain that there is more relevance for pentecostal scholarship in an alliance with evangelicals than in rejecting their approach to Scripture;

v) There is a grave danger that the pragmatism of late twentieth century pentecostalism may well find the post-modern paradigm attractive. This would lead to the movement being disassociated from its biblical roots, and eventually to cultic obscurity.

Pentecostal scholarship may well benefit by being informed concerning current literary theories, particularly those of Gadamer, Ricoeur, Derrida, Iser, Fish and Jeanrond. Intellectual openness in this regard can only be beneficial to the movement. However, this does not mean that the values and findings of these scholars need be adopted by the pentecostal movement, which has its own paradigm and ethos. The gravest challenge to the movement in these theories lies in the area of the referential aspect of the Biblical text, especially with regard to historical and spiritual reality. While pentecostals need to be critically aware of the positivistic presuppositions which generally underlie the historical-critical method, they dare not lose their own notion of historical continuity with the biblical people of God. For this reason the content and intent of historical narrative, and the didactic literature which accompanies it, *must* be taken seriously by pentecostal scholarship.

The attraction of *being relevant to this age* can also not be ignored. Pentecostals may argue that the spirit and philosophy of *every* age needs to be confronted with the plain historical intent of Scripture. It is only a secondary task to attempt to communicate these historical truths in a relevant manner. The challenge of relevance should not be allowed to lead pentecostals to modify or relativise the *content* of the full gospel, as derived from the Scriptures, although it will always affect the manner in which it is communicated.

> The notion that post-modernism makes room for talk of an encounter with God is perhaps one of its most inviting attractions. However, if the notion of spiritual experience is divorced from biblical historical events, then the danger of replacing the rational content of scripturally-founded experience with a relative form, and of replacing meaningful change with meaningless sensation, confronts the movement.

Pentecostal scholarship will probably be faced by the challenges offered by these hermeneutical schools for at least the next generation. The positive side of this challenge is that it will drive pentecostals to further serious attempts at self-understanding and articulation of their *propria*. The scope of the challenges offers hope that the resultant pentecostal self-understanding, and its hermeneutic in particular, will be cogently articulated and capable of justification. However, pentecostal scholarship would do well to take the challenge beyond apologetics, and enter into meaningful debate with each of these schools. The most *difficult* group to confront in such a manner is the Kenyon-Hagin-Copeland axis, as their hermeneutic appears to armour them against reasoned expostulation. The most *emotional* debate appears to be between evangelicals and pentecostals, with the issues of 'subsequence' and 'initial evidence' in the forefront. A major challenge for pentecostals, particularly in South Africa, is to relate to the political and liberation theologians in terms of the clear commonalities they share, as well as the glaring differences between the political activism of those groups and the quietism and pacifism that marked pentecostalism from the beginning. However, this should not deter pentecostal scholarship from confronting all of these schools with its own experience and understanding of divine and historical reality. The notion that God still reveals himself dynamically among his people today, in terms of revelations, signs and wonders, challenges at least three of these schools to rethink their basic presuppositions with regard to history and revelation. The fourth group, the Faith movement, is challenged to rethink the parameters within which it understands these elements to occur and be tested. Pentecostals might begin to think of their hermeneutics and theology less in a derivative and apologetic sense, and participate more as partners in the debate, insisting that their notion of God's presence among his people be granted serious consideration by all who would deal with the processes of interpretation termed 'hermeneutics'.

7.2.2 The affirmatory aspects of the prescriptive task

Affirmatively, the prescriptive task of a search for a pentecostal hermeneutic will attempt to identify elements and hermeneutical values which *are* consistent with the antecedents and dynamic of the movement. This study has pointed out that this aspect of the task cannot proceed in total isolation of either method or interest, but must take cognisance of developments in the entire field of hermeneutical philosophy and literary theory, including non-pentecostal and even secular schools. Such interest should not be with the intent of borrowing or deriving a hermeneutic from secular schools, but primarily so that pentecostals might be *informed* in the process of articulating their own self-understanding. In this way they need not 're-invent the wheel', hermeneutically speaking.

The following distinctive elements of a pentecostal approach to the Bible were identified in this research:

1. The idea that pentecostals are involved in an *ongoing history with God*, and therefore see themselves as the people of God of the new covenant, especially as made evident in the fulfilment of the promise of the presence of the Spirit. This fulfilment is seen in the discernible presence and working of God in their midst and mission in terms of the charismata. This provides a sense of pneumatic continuity with the church community of Acts, as well as with the charismatic history of Israel. It also implies that historical categories be taken seriously in interpreting the Bible. In line with an emphasis of their Old Testament charismatic predecessors, the prophets, it requires that the content of the Bible not be remodelled to fit the consensus ethic of any particular age, but rather be held up as a radical alternative to the values of every age. This sense of historical continuity also presupposes an *holistic approach* to or understanding of the Bible: it is a record, from the pen of many witnesses, of the history of God with the human species, from creation to the *parousia*;

2. An emphasis upon the need for *implementation, demonstration and realisation* in the interpretation process. The phenomenology of pentecostalism demands that God's presence and power be made evident to believer and unbeliever alike. A pentecostal hermeneutic will thus not stop at the level of either *explanation* or *understanding*, but at the level of *implementation*, *demonstration* and *realisation*. The effect of scholarship in this area should thus promote charismatic phenomena rather than hinder or ignore them. Since a pentecostal person could only have become pentecostal by virtue of a dynamic experience with the Spirit of God, a pentecostal hermeneutic should be aimed at the promotion of such an encounter, rather than perhaps effectively promoting its marginalisation in favour of a more supposedly detached academic approach. This raises the issue of a relevant pentecostal *interpreter*, and not just a relevant pentecostal model for interpretation.

3. The relationship between *scriptural narrative, patterns, and practice*. The role of narrative and orality in the success of pentecostal missions was highlighted here. The link between the essence of pentecostalism as *experience* (rather than doctrine) of God, and the narratives of Scripture as *testimony* to the way God works, is central. The narrative of eg. the Acts of the Apostles is essentially the testimony of *what* God did amongst and through the New Testament people of God, and of *how* He did so. The narrative is not cast in an alien and distant semiotic system which must be deciphered at length by a remote critic, but speaks of repeatable events which believers who are remote in time may nevertheless experience personally for themselves, with the same content and in the same way. The early church community thus becomes a role-model for the twentieth century pentecostal community. This is not understood in a biblicistic way, as though it were a perfect or ultimate role-model. However, pentecostals in this century accept that they can experience God in a similar way, and with similar effects, to the first church community. A pentecostal hermeneutic will thus make much of the stories of Scripture, using them to test their own experience, and to promote their mission. Since the spread of

pentecostalism has been essentially the spread of a particular experience of God, it has normally been achieved by the re-telling of God's story. Since the telling has been accompanied by signs of power identical to those of the biblical narrative, the story of the movement has paralleled that of the rapid growth of the first century church. In a sense, pentecostals see themselves as the continuation of the biblical *drama*, the scholar featuring as both critic and player.

The interpretation in the pentecostal movement of the didactic portions of the New Testament is thus placed in the context of *historical events*. The epistles are understood to have been written in just such a context, and are thus not primarily source-books of dogma, but are rather guidelines for experiencing God. A credible approach to their understanding would thus be in a similar (if not exact) context. Pentecostals might argue that any interpretation of the epistles proceeding from a markedly dissimilar context might well influence the adequacy or viability of the interpretation. The historical interest in pentecostal interpretation can thus never be an end in itself (as though to accumulate academic data), but is aimed at instruction in a repeatable experience, in a temporal, social and cultural context which may nevertheless differ from that in which the apostolic teaching arose. Here again the emphasis is on the Bible as a guide along a Way: the Bible is not itself the dynamic of the Way - that role is reserved for the Holy Spirit. The Bible provides the essential guidelines within which the dynamic of the Spirit might be sought, followed and tested. The role of the Holy Spirit is thus far more than that of mere 'illuminator' of Scripture. New Testament introductory studies are therefore also crucial to the pentecostal understanding of Scripture.

4. The relationship between the scriptural canon as revelation of God, and the role of *ongoing revelation such as dreams, visions, prophecy*, etc. Pentecostals maintain that revelation did not come to an end with the closing of the canon, but continues today. Such ongoing revelation is part of most pentecostal's

personal experience. The movement thus faces a challenge from the non-pentecostal church which demands that it stipulate exactly how the authority granted to these revelations relates to the authority of the canon of Scripture. The answer a pentecostal hermeneutic *must* give is that the Bible is the absolute and only rule for doctrine, behaviour and experience. All ongoing revelation must thus be tested against biblical criteria and content. A basic understanding is that no new *content* to the Christian faith is offered by these revelations, but that they are primarily associated with Christian *practice*. Further, they are part of the fulfilled promise associated with the New Covenant, and (on scriptural grounds) should thus be expected to be part of valid Christian experience. Disciples walking the Way of Scripture, involved in the mission laid upon them by the God of Scripture, might expect in their lives and midst a revelatory manifestation of the presence of that God. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges to the movement is the present-day diminishment of the revelatory gifts in pentecostal living and liturgy, to the extent that the lives of many members of pentecostal denominations, and the liturgies of their worship, are often in no way different to those of their evangelical counterparts. It will be ironic if the pentecostal scholarship were eventually to formulate a theology and hermeneutic which does the ethos of the movement justice, yet the movement itself, as a religious phenomenon, ceases to be peculiarly pentecostal at grass-roots level.

7.3 The application of a pentecostal hermeneutic

The exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 undertaken in this study led to the following conclusions concerning the effect of the consistent application of a pentecostal hermeneutic:

i) A pentecostal reading of 1 Corinthians 14 will promote and encourage more charismatic activity and participation in the worship service;

ii) It will promote evangelism and a missionary spirit;

iii) It will challenge pentecostals to expose themselves to more rational

methods and content in the study of the Bible and in evaluating charismatic phenomena;

iv) It will urge believers to show more mutual concern;

v) It will lead to a more mature discernment of phenomena presenting themselves as 'spiritual'.

This sort of exegesis is possible and relevant primarily in the context of the ongoing manifestation of the Spirit of God, dynamically, among the people of God. It might be argued that it would not be at all possible in any other setting. Can a meaningful explanation or understanding of such charismatic portions of Scripture be achieved in any other context? Can the book of Acts be truly understood in a church environment where Acts-like phenomena are not common occurrences? Can the experience and message of the Old Testament prophets truly be assimilated by readers who have not also experienced a life-shattering and -changing charismatic encounter with God, such as that experienced by the prophets themselves? A pentecostal hermeneutic is the ultimate challenge to scholarly detachment, not because the Bible is a non-rational book demanding total intellectual surrender, but because rational and historical scrutiny of its content confronts the reader with a God who is truly there, who draws readers into his ongoing history, changing the their lives, enduing them with power, and making them witnesses to the activity of God through the activity of his Spirit who testifies of the risen Lord. Pentecostal hermeneutics will do more than challenge the world of biblical scholarship: it will challenge biblical scholars themselves, to test not just the relevance of their methodology, but also of themselves as people, to the interpretation and communication of the Bible.

7.4 Concluding remarks

This research has been undertaken at a time when the notion of 'pentecostal hermeneutics' is a very live issue indeed. It can not therefore claim to be a comprehensive nor ultimate exposition of the debate or the pentecostal position. It is an attempt, from the southern foot of the African continent, to come to grips with the some of the challenges facing pentecostal

scholarship in this area. During its writing numerous articles have appeared, learned discussions taken place, and proposals been made, in the area of pentecostal hermeneutics. A subsidiary aim of this research has thus been to highlight some of the more constant elements associated with the debate, such as the historical antecedents of the pentecostal movement and their implications for a consistently pentecostal ethos. The tensions caused by attempting to import the hermeneutical values and methods of non-pentecostal scholarship may not always be identical when new methods and challenges arise: however, the underlying pentecostal ethos, with its sense of continuity with biblical history and its sense of God's presence among his people, is a constant which might be used to test any other proposals that might be made to pentecostal scholarship.

I have attempted to bring to the debate my own observations and values, as well as my own experience of pentecostal phenomena. This is not an attempt to absolutise my own experience, but is something I find inescapable, as pentecostal hermeneutics is such that it presupposes a pentecostal hermeneute who is (along with his own immediate pentecostal milieu) very much part of the process of interpretation. It is also impossible to live in Africa without becoming aware of the nature and consequence of cultural diversity which is brought to religion, and biblical religion in particular. I have attempted to include some of this cultural eclecticism in this work, as a challenge to those who would attempt to derive a pentecostal hermeneutic in narrower cultural confines. A viable and credible hermeneutic will have to take notice of precisely *who* the pentecostals are: and only a small minority are white middle-class Westerners.

This research has brought to light a number of issues and areas which I believe are crucial to the ongoing discussion of a viable self-understanding and theological methodology for pentecostalism. They include:

1. The similarities in ethos that exist between pentecostalism and Anabaptism. Despite the fact that these have much in common, relatively little interest in Anabaptism has been displayed by pentecostal researchers, and virtually none in terms of the use of Scripture among them. While the debate about the liabilities and benefits associated with the

evangelicalisation of North American pentecostalism continues, this commonality might explain much of the difference and tension between pentecostal and evangelical use of Scripture.

2. The challenges provided by contemporary literary theory for the pentecostal understanding of the nature and authority of the Bible. This includes the extent to which pentecostals regard the Bible (and the New Testament in particular) as a literary work as opposed to a propositional or expository text.

3. The unique contribution that pentecostal teleology offers to theological hermeneutics. The essence of this is an understanding that Scripture was given, and should be used, to promote a dynamic encounter with God that leads to a charismatic life-style.

4. Flowing from (3) above, a plea for the re-admission of the notion of transcendence and divine-human encounter into the wider Christian hermeneutical debate.

5. The challenge to pentecostal scholarship to produce not only relevant and viable hermeneutics and exegesis, but relevant and viable hermeneutes and exegetes as well.

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